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MP wants identity check on dead pets

ANIMAL owners in the West Midlands will no longer be informed if their pet is killed on the roads.

The Highways Agency has axed its policy of checking identity chips on animals that are found on roads but only in certain parts of the country.

Campaigners say the decision means some owners may never find out what happened to their pet.

They have won the backing of Dudley North MP Ian Austin, who said it was unfair that checks are carried out in some areas and not others.

Overturned

The Government announced last year that all pet dogs would have to have identity chips by 2016 to cut down on stray animals.

Mr Austin has written to Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin in the hope of getting the decision overturned.

He said: "I'm sure lots of people in Dudley will be concerned that their family pet could die on the roads and they might never be informed."

"It's unfair that checks are carried out in some areas but the West Midlands loses out, so I'm urging the Government to do decent checks across the country."

Man's body is found in park

AN INQUEST has heard how a 38-year-old man hanged himself in Dudley's Priory Park.

George Hall, who was unemployed and lived in Bluebell Road, Dudley, was discovered by a security guard in a shelter at the park.

The guard notified the police following the discovery of Mr Hall's body on November 12.

Black Country coroner Zafar Siddique recorded a verdict of suicide.

APOLOGY FOR VENUE CLOSURE

A SENIOR councillor has apologised after shows at Dudley Town Hall were postponed because the venue must remain closed until late March.

The venue has been shut because of urgent repairs required to the ceiling.

Rearranged dates have been announced for All Star Superslam Wrestling, Soul Survivors, The Good Old Days of Music Hall and veteran comedy star Ken Dodd.

By Charlie Benton

13. Comedy veteran Ken Dodd had been due to appear at the venue on March 7 but his show will now take place on June 20 instead.

The Tommy Mundon memorial concert has been moved to Brierley Hill Civic Hall on February 17, as has the Shine concert on February 24.

Bookings for the banqueting suite are unaffected by the work, the council said.

Jesson's CE Primary School's festive choral concert involving 175 performers, due to take place before Christmas, had to be called off because organisers were unable to find an alternative venue at short notice.

The discovery of a problem with the ceiling came just months after the building was given a revamp, including a new floor.

Loose plaster on the ceiling of Dudley Town Hall needs to be fixed.

The first show to be rearranged is the Superslam American Wrestling which had been due to take place on February 14 and has been moved to October 29.

The Soul Survivors gig has been moved from February 21 to December 5 and The Good Old Days of Variety, originally scheduled for March 3, is now on October

Hat's the way to do it in Wonderland



All set for Wonderland – Helen Hollis, Shelby Chillington, Nicholas Round, Tate Wolverson and Samantha Hollis

AUDIENCES can enjoy a trip down the rabbit hole to Wonderland as an amateur dramatic group takes to the stage with its latest show.

The Rainbow Pantomime group will be performing their version of Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland at the Dormston Mill Theatre in Sedgley from Sunday.

The cast of more than 30 have been rehearsing since September with regular sessions at both the Coseley School and at St Bernadette's church, Wombourne.

Dudley and Stourbridge town halls could also see management transferred to community groups.

The show promises to be a real family affair with several mother

and daughter combinations on stage.

Among them will be Rosemary Thomas who is appearing on stage alongside her seven-year-old granddaughter Ava Bennett for the first time. Rosemary is in the adult chorus, while Ava is appearing with the junior chorus and dancers.

Dora Woolridge, a founder member of the group launched 23 years ago

said: "The family will be very proud on the opening night. We also have several mother and daughter combinations in the cast and fathers are also involved, although that is mainly on backstage or front of house duties.

We pride ourselves on being a family orientated company."

Mrs Woolridge, of Wombourne, said: "Things have gone very well with the production and we are all looking forward to the opening night."

Rainbow Productions raised more than £2,000 for the Teenage Cancer Trust with last year's production.

Alice in Wonderland will be staged from Sunday, when there will be a matinee at 2.30pm, to be followed by evening shows from Monday to Saturday with curtain up at 7.30pm. There will also be a matinee on the Saturday. Call 01902 894472.

Counter protest to EDL planned

A PROTEST is being planned to counter a demonstration by the English Defence League in Dudley.

Black Country Unite Against Fascism (UAF) is organising the action in response to the EDL's planned march on the town centre on Saturday, February 7.

More than 700 supporters of the EDL are expected to show in protest at a new mosque planned by Dudley Muslim Association.

The UAF says its members will assemble in Stone Street Square from 11am, and remain positioned in the town centre until the EDL leaves. It has the support of Dudley Trades Union Council and the Muslim Union.

In a statement, Black Country UAF spokesman Jerry Langford said: "The EDL are coming to Dudley to ferment hatred, division and stir up racism."

"Wherever the EDL have turned up, we have seen drunkenness and fighting with random attacks on property, places of worship and people of ethnic minority background."

Four years ago violence erupted when the EDL last led a protest in Dudley.

Police have warned that violence will not be tolerated.

■ Thugs sent to prison – see page 3

Teens held after crash

FOUR teenagers were arrested after a car smashed into an insurance firm in Sedgley.

The Audi A4 hit the wall of Life & General Insurance Consultants on Bilton Street at around 2am on Monday.

Two girls and two boys – who are all aged 16 – were arrested at the scene on suspicion of stealing the vehicle.

One of the four was taken to hospital but was returned to police custody.



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Suspended sentence for energy fraud

A FRAUDSTER who claimed he could get compensation from energy companies but pocketed people's cash has been given a suspended jail term. Shaun Morris received £34,000 from 310 people across the West Midlands.

He was handed £100 to £150 each time after saying he could get unrealistic amounts of cash back from big suppliers on a 'no win, no fee'

basis after putting adverts in newspapers. But the 45 year-old kept the money and was aggressive to some customers when they wanted to pull out, Stafford Crown Court was told.

Morris pleaded guilty to three counts of fraud by false representation, two counts of engaging in aggressive commercial practices and one of engaging in unfair practice between September 2012 and October 2013. Morris, of Birch Road, Stone, was given a two year prison sentence, suspended for two years, and ordered to carry out 200 hours of unpaid work.

Mr Tony Watkin, prosecuting, said Energy Compensation Bureau had been established by Morris in Stafford in 2012, but he had no expertise or experience.

Victims included Susan Homer

from Dudley, who was told she could get up to £2,000. She then spoke to her energy supplier and told Morris she wanted to cancel a meeting. He then started "ranting" at her and invoiced her £65.

Mr Peter McCartney, defending, said the father-of-two who previously served in the armed forces and construction industry had exaggerated the level of compensation.

Entrepreneur spirit is thriving in borough

JOBSEEKERS in Dudley are among the most entrepreneurial in Britain after the borough came eighth for the number of new business start-ups in towns and cities.

Figures from the Department for Work and Pensions showed jobseekers set up 640 new businesses with help from the government's New Enterprise Allowance (NEA), which provides tailored support

for benefit claimants through 700 Jobcentre Plus offices.

This number meant Dudley finished ahead of Manchester, which had 590 businesses and Doncaster on 570. Neighbouring Birmingham came second in the table with 1,080 entrepreneurs, while top place went to Liverpool, which boasted 1,140 start-ups.

The figures were welcomed by David Sparks, leader of Dudley Borough Council, who said: "This is good news and it verifies our attempt over the years to encourage young entrepreneurs. We pioneered a partnership with the Prince's Youth Business Trust."

More than 450 new businesses have been set up every week over the last year thanks to the NEA, which helps people on benefits become their own boss.

The NEA helps jobseekers, lone parents and people on sickness benefits set up their own business.

The scheme has helped set up over 60,000 new businesses, with help from a mentor and financial support payable through a weekly allowance.

As part of the Government's long-term economic plan to create jobs by backing small business and enterprise, the NEA has helped jobseekers of all ages.

More than 4,000 young people, 11,000 disabled people and 14,000 over-50s have been helped to turn their hobbies into businesses.

Help plea to scrap dealers



Help needed to clear site — project manager Mick Freer in the historic garden

VOLUNTEERS restoring an 18th century walled garden are looking for scrap metal dealers to assist them

The group is clearing the grade one-listed garden at Leasowes Park in Halesowen after taking ownership last year.

They want to restore the garden to its former beauty and then reopen it to the public by the summer. But they face clearing six unwanted green houses, a huge metal boiler and two portacabins.

Group leader Mick Freer is asking for help. He said: "We're looking for some

friendly scrap metal dealers who can come in and take away the buildings, greenhouses and boiler. They are too big for us to dismantle but I'm sure they would be worth something to a scrap dealer."

The team have also launched a Leasowes Walled Garden Appeal and are searching for sponsors.

Meanwhile, members are spending their free time clearing up the site, which had been targeted by vandals. It was last used by Birmingham Metropolitan College but has been unused for several years.

Rubbish removal is taking too long

ENVIRONMENT Agency officials have been accused of being "slow to move" on a £750,000 clean-up of a towering mound of rubbish in Brierley Hill.

Robert McNaughton, director of Refuse Derived Fuel Ltd director, served a jail term for failing to comply with a court order to clear the site in Moor Street. But the Environment Agency continues to struggle to get the 19ft high rubbish pile cleared.

The agency has been granted a writ of sequestration from the High Court, allowing officials to seize assets from Mr McNaughton and the company, which campaigners want used to clear away the waste.

Local councillor Rachel Harris said the process was taking too long. "The EA have been quite slow to move to sequester the funding to get this rubbish shifted," she said. "The council in the meantime is doing its best. We are trying to control the rat issues. The residents want something done now."

Environment Agency manager in the West Midlands, David Hudson, said bailiffs had also been sent to Mr McNaughton's home as the agency reviews what assets can be seized.

Man is facing murder charge

A 32-year-old man has appeared in crown court charged with the murder of Baljit Singh, who was found in the basement of a house in Beeches Road, Rowley Regis, on New Year's Day.

Mr Singh, aged 50, had been missing since December 23 from his home in Birmingham.

Stuart Millers, aged 32, of Beeches Road, is accused of killing Mr Singh.

He appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court last week and was remanded in custody and to appear at the same court for plea and case management on April 1.

Player's funeral

THE funeral of Wolves FA Cup winner Jimmy Dunn will be held on Wednesday, January 28, at Streetley Crematorium, at 2.15pm.

Mr Dunn, who scored 40 goals in 143 appearances for Wolves 1941-52 and was a 1949 cup winner, died aged 91.

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Attempted murder charge for schoolboy

A 14-year-old schoolboy has appeared in court charged with attempted murder after a man was stabbed on a Dudley bus.

The youth, from Dudley, is accused of stabbing a 29-year-old man aboard the Number 1 bus in Burton Road on January 2.

He faces a further charge of wounding a 19-year-old woman that is related to the same incident.

At Wolverhampton Crown Court on Friday, the boy — who cannot be named for legal reasons — spoke only to confirm his name.

Custody

He was remanded in custody and is due to appear at the same court for a plea and case management hearing to be held on March 27.

A provisional trial date has been scheduled for June 15.

Police are still appealing for anyone who was on the No1 bus at around 9.25pm on January 2 to contact Detective Sergeant Phil Pullinger in Force CID on 101.

Alternatively, people can call the Crimestoppers line to give information anonymously on 0800 555111.

Petition call for grit box

ELDERLY residents living in maisonettes in Sedgley are calling for extra gritting to protect them from falling on ice.

People in Ettymore Close have signed a petition for a grit box to be introduced closer to their homes. They currently have to go up several flights of steps to get to the nearest grit box.

MEP and Dudley councillor Bill Etheridge has handed the petition to Dudley Council. He said: "I am deeply concerned someone could be badly hurt in the attempt to access the grit bin in Uplands Road."

Roadworks due

MOTORISTS have been warned to expect delays on a road leading into Oldbury.

Roadworks have begun in Park Lane, which leads onto busy Oldbury Ringway, with temporary traffic lights in place.

The work is expected to be completed by Tuesday.

EDL thugs sent to prison after violence in city

SEVERAL English Defence League supporters have been jailed after thuggish behaviour in Birmingham city centre.

Violence flared at a protest in July 2013 which turned the city centre into a battleground as pavings slabs and bottles were thrown in horrific clashes with police.

Yobs also torched a Muslim prayer cap and Pakistani flag during the disorder in the city's main entertainment district, around Broad Street and Centenary Square.

Operations were conducted across the

Midlands and further afield to arrest those believed to be involved in the disorder.

People were arrested from as far afield as West Sussex and Tyne and Wear, having travelled to the West Midlands to take part in the demonstration. Six defendants came from the Black Country.

Message

Superintendent Richard Baker said: "Violence has no place on the streets of Birmingham, regardless of motivation or

whatever cause people are supporting. This should send a clear message to those who are intent on coming to the West Midlands to cause trouble — we will not tolerate such behaviour."

Among those sentenced was Jake Hill, aged 32, of Church Street, Stourbridge, who was jailed for 22 months. A court hearing last month heard how he pushed a policeman and was part of a crowd which attacked four officers trapped between two vans.

Lee Joshua, 43, of St Marys Court, Brier-

ley Hill, received a 16 month sentence. He was said to have been at the forefront of attempts to break through police lines.

Thomas Wilkie, 23, of Kent Road in Wednesbury was jailed for 18 months after kicking out at a police officer.

Also sentenced were Mark Connor, 25, of Tantara Street, Walsall, who received 22 months in prison; John Warrender, 28, of Oakdale Close, Oldbury, got 15 months; James Olley-Shields, 22, of Hanbury Hill, Stourbridge, was jailed for 12 months.

NEWS IN BRIEF

A&E crisis eases after 'worst' week

THE crisis sweeping across accident and emergency departments has started to show signs of improvement, hospital bosses said.

Manor Hospital in Walsall and the Royal Stoke University Hospital downgraded their major incident status.

New Cross in Wolverhampton, Russells Hall in Dudley, and Sandwell General Hospital all said their situation had become more manageable.

It comes after NHS bosses branded last week as the 'worst' they had seen in 30 years.

Third suspected arson incident

FIREFIGHTERS tackled a third suspected arson at an industrial park in three weeks.

A crew from Stourbridge was called to the fire at a workshop at the site off Saltwells Road in Brierley Hill on Saturday afternoon.

The workshop was made of corrugated iron and timber and was well alight when firefighters arrived to tackle the blaze at around 2pm.

They took 25 minutes to deal with the fire.

Dinner date for Crafty Cockney

A FORMER world champion darts player will be taking on guests at a sporting dinner in Brierley Hill.

Eric Bristow, known as the Crafty Cockney, will also be speaking and taking part in a question and answer session at the event run by Sports Talk Events at the Copthorne Hotel on June 18. The event, from 7pm, also includes a two-course meal.

Call 01902 244220.

1,000 chase 300 paramedic jobs

RECORD numbers want to become paramedics with more than 1,000 applying for 300 student posts with West Midlands Ambulance Service. Spokesman Steve Parry said: "The next stage will be to shortlist applicants before assessment and interview. We are aiming to have the first of our new recruits on training courses by March."

Family

Mr Poole, aged 52, from Ettingshall Road, Coseley, has said although the group, which has more than 20 performing members and around 50 members in total, is a youth band, they have many adult members too.

Mr Poole said: "I would say to people, come along and have a look, try us out, and then we can go from there. We are not just a band, we are a family."

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Club is hit again

HALESOWEN Town FC has been hit by a second break-in in five months as thieves made off with £1,000 worth of grass cutting equipment last week — when fans are raising cash to revamp The Grove.

College boss worried that cuts delay crossing appeal

DUDLEY College's principal has pleaded for a pedestrian crossing to be approved, saying delays with its appeal bid are 'putting the lives of students and staff in danger.'

It comes after a student was recently injured after being hit by a car while crossing The Broadway, between the college's main campus and Dudley Evolve in Tower Street.

An appeal was lodged with the Planning Inspectorate after Dudley Council turned down the crossing scheme. Six months later, a decision is still yet to be made.

The Planning Inspectorate has confirmed the application is now being looked at and a site visit is due to take place later this month. A decision will then be made at a later date.

Mr Williams said the accident took place before Christmas and left the student with injuries to his foot and hand.

Concerned

He added: "There is obviously a pressing need for a crossing and I am extremely concerned that a further incident could result in a fatality."

"I was astounded earlier in the year that our application had been rejected, particularly after the council's own investigations deemed the application should be approved.

"The addition of a controlled crossing had always been a requirement in the

Euro MP is former cricketer

THE newly appointed Conservative MEP for the West Midlands has paid tribute to his predecessor.

Former professional cricketer Daniel Dalton automatically replaced the late Philip Bradbourn, who died in December following a battle with cancer.

No by-election was held because European Parliament rules any vacancies are filled by the next person on the political party's list of candidates from the last election.



Join our band — the Coseley Comets are looking for more marching musicians

Band on lookout for new recruits

A MARCHING band which took a starring role in last year's Birmingham International Air Tattoo is looking for new members.

The Coseley Comets, a youth marching band, has performed at the tattoo, which was held in November, for three years in a row.

The secretary of the band says they are now looking for new members as they prepare for upcoming shows.

Steve Poole said: "Performing at the air tattoo was fantastic as always."

"The kids absolutely love doing it because it is a way for them to meet all sorts of new people and take part in something enjoyable."

Family

Mr Poole, aged 52, from Ettingshall Road, Coseley, has said although the group, which has more than 20 performing members and around 50 members in total, is a youth band, they have many adult members too.

Mr Poole said: "I would say to people, come along and have a look, try us out, and then we can go from there. We are not just a band, we are a family."

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CHOP down laurels. Chop down apple tree. Chop down hydrangeas. Burn the lot in the brazier. Slash, hack, burn, burn, burn. Gardening. It's a man thing. But only in January.

A FEW days ago I wrote about the curious veil of silence which has descended on the Scottish bin-lorry tragedy. Six people were killed on December 22 when the lorry careered along the pavements of Glasgow. Yet all has gone very quiet. The city council says it will never identify the lorry driver or crew. Now, a senior Scottish lawyer says it could be years before the bereaved and injured are told what happened. He condemns Scotland's fatal-accident inquiry process as flawed and "bordering on inhumane." So far, no decision has even been taken on whether an inquiry will be held. You might imagine that Scots would be demanding answers to this appalling national tragedy. But the majority of comments I can find online insist the authorities know best and all will be sorted out eventually. I can only conclude that folk have more faith in their lords and masters north of the border than we have down here.

BACK in August I asked, in my cynical old way, whether William Pooley, the Ebola nurse, would feature in the New Year Honours List for risking his life to save the lives of others - "or does he have to sing pop songs, row a boat or ride a bike very fast as well?" In fact Pooley got nothing. Honours went to an actress who can impersonate Cilla Black, a fashion designer who invented the mini skirt 50 years ago, and to Joan Collins, presumably for being Joan Collins for all these years. Fine priorities, eh?

IN Wednesday's Thought for the Day (Radio 4) an Anglican bishop, Nick Baines, delivered a little homily, condemning protests in Germany against "the Islamisation of the West." He asked: "Why is it that in such matters, perception is so much more powerful than reality? Why is it that the fires of fear are so easy to stoke?" Five hours later Islamist gunmen burst into the offices of a satirical magazine and slaughtered a dozen Parisians. You were saying, Bishop ...?

MY item on the 30th anniversary of the mobile phone reminds an ex-cop of the happy days when these huge, expensive cellphones were used mainly by the media and criminal gangs. They were also dead easy to intercept, using scanners. He recalls endless hours of listening in on thug-chat which suddenly produced the whispering gem: "Seven, tomorrow night, the post office."

MORE tales from BM (Before Mobiles). A reader, inspired by the 30th anniversary of the first mobile-phone call, remembers the era when a colleague carried a bag of mints and humbugs for the specific purpose of bribing receptionists to allow him to use their phone to call his head office. He remembers getting his first mobile phone as "blissful". And what about the bliss of being able to bribe a receptionist with a humbug? Those were the days.

WASTE not, want not. Full marks to SpaceX, the American company aiming to recycle damn great parts of its space rockets by dropping them many thousands of feet out of the heavens and "soft-landing" them on a sea barge on the Atlantic. Not sure I'd want to be the skipper on that boat.

SO how's Dry January coming along? Missing a nice glass of Merlot yet? Aching for a pint of ale? I spotted this headline yesterday on a feature about alternatives to alcohol: "Soft drinks so tasty you won't miss booze." Oh, yes you will. No pop yet invented can compare with Mother Nature's oldest comedy double-act, the Brothers Ferment and Distil.

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£3k bill for sending child to fit camp

DUDLEY Council has spent almost £3,000 sending an obese child to a fitness camp.

The unnamed child, aged between 11 and 16, was sent for help last year.

The council is the only one in Birmingham and the Black Country to commission such a service.

Dudley's health boss said it only happened in "exceptional circumstances" and after necessary health checks had been carried out.

A total of 760 children in Year 6 are classified as obese in the borough. In reception, 363 children are obese. The figures come from the National Child Measurement Programme.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health, defended the council's spending.

"We find that tackling the issues that lead to obesity is cheaper and more sensible in the long run."

Lifestyles

"This is about enabling a lifestyle change to prevent long term health conditions and future pressures on health services."

"We also provide full support to the family including nutritional

and healthier lifestyles advice. Only in exceptional circumstances, and following medical checks to identify any underlying health issues, would we take the step of referring a child to a focussed camp."

She added: "We also work with the family on longer term changes to help when the child returns home, which has proven extremely successful."

Improved meals for hospital patients

PATIENT meals are being revamped at Russells Hall Hospital with menus offering a wider choice being rolled out across the wards.

Concerns about food not being hot enough has prompted Interserve, which provides the meals, to invest £500,000 on trolleys which will be able to warm plates.

A survey in 2013 showed that only 44 per cent of patients were happy with what was being served up at the hospital. Since then bosses have been working to make improvements.

For lunch and supper, patients now have the choice of four hot meals, four cold options, six side dishes, and a variety of both hot and cold puddings.

This is in addition to the 24 hot dishes available to pre-order from the special menu which includes gluten free, dairy free, vegan, vegetarian and halal options.

A trial has taken place to get the views of patients and unpopular meals have been dropped.

Chief executive of Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust Paula Clark said: "Our new inpatient menus are already in use in four ward areas — ward B4, ward C5, children's ward and our medical high dependency unit."

Salmonella in chocs fear

ALDI has issued a product recall after salmonella was found in a batch of chocolate on sale in stores.

The supermarket chain is recalling its 200g packs of Chocour Treasures with a best before date of September 1 2015.

Salmonella was detected in one batch of the product, which consists of hazelnut wrapped in waffle and milk chocolate. The batch has been on sale in Aldi stores in the Midlands only.

The Food Standards Agency say Aldi is advising customers not to eat the chocolate.

Laundrette plan

PLANS to convert an empty shop into a laundrette have been lodged.

Jahan Dad has submitted proposals for the business in High Street, Brierley Hill.

A decision on the change of use application will be made by Dudley Council within three months.

One in four children overweight aged four

FOUR in 10 Black Country youngsters are overweight when they leave primary school, new figures show.

And around a quarter are already overweight by the time they are just four years old.

Public Health England has released the shocking figures, for which Dudley and Wolverhampton tops the fat league in the West Midlands.

In the Black Country and Staffordshire, the figures tower above the national averages, particularly for 11-year-olds.

In England, around 33 per cent of children are overweight when they leave primary school, but in the Black Country this rises to around 40 per cent.

Obese

Dudley is joint-worst in the West Midlands for fat four-year-olds with 26.4 per cent deemed overweight or obese, the same as in Wolverhampton.

In Walsall this figure is 24.1 per cent and in Sandwell it drops to 21.8 per cent.

All four Black Country areas hover around 40 per cent for overweight 11-year-olds, with Wolverhampton the highest on 41.8 per cent but Dudley is the lowest on 38.6 per cent.

Jane DeVille-Almond is a senior health lecturer at the University of Wolverhampton and also chairs the British Obesity Society. She said it was no surprise that the

by Tim Spiers

Black Country was above the national average in the obesity league and explained that the figures reflected an ongoing trend.

"As with any industrialised community where people historically eat foods with a high percentage of fat it's difficult for people to change their dietary habits," she said.

"There's a clear link between poverty and deprivation — it's nothing new.

"In Wolverhampton it would be wonderful to show we can turn it around. We need to show the rest of the country we can do it.

"We've got a generation of kids who haven't watched their parents cook meals or families sit down to eat together. That needs to change."

Public Health England released the child obesity figures as it launched its Change4Life campaign to encourage parents to cut down the amount of sugar their children eat or drink.

South Pacific at Mill

WOLVERHAMPTON-BASED Phoenix Theatre Company will be performing its second show in Sedgley next month.

The Rodgers and Hammerstein classic musical South Pacific will be staged in the Mill Theatre at Dormston School, Mill Bank, from February 3 to 7.

There will be 7.30 performances each day and a 2.30pm matinee on the Saturday.

Tickets are available by calling 01902 897520 or e-mailing info@phoenixtheatreco.co.uk

The company made its debut a year ago with Olive, which was also performed at the Mill.

Josh born on the pavement



Alex Smith and Keiron Haddleton with baby Josh, born yards from the hospital doors

GIVING birth alone on a freezing pavement at 4.20am is no one's idea of the perfect delivery. But Josh Haddleton just couldn't wait to come into the world.

His mother Alexandra Smith gave birth yards from the entrance of Russells Hall Hospital. Her partner Keiron Haddleton had hurriedly gone into the hospital to get help. While he was inside Miss Smith, from Rowley Regis, gave birth to her third child.

She wrapped her newborn baby in her coat and held him close, trying to shield him from the icy air. The 29-year-old, of Bryan Budd Close, said: "I just tried to keep him warm, holding him like a rugby ball. It was scary but when I saw Keiron coming I knew it would be OK and help was coming."

Miss Smith said that when she felt the baby coming two hours earlier at home on December 30, she assumed she would have a long wait ahead as had been the case with her other two children. Josh, who weighed 6lb 3oz, was allowed home the following day.

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Reward is offered to catch car vandals

MORE than 50 cars were targeted in a vandalism spree over four days in Dudley and victims are now putting up a reward to catch the culprits.

Bricks were thrown through rear windscreens and tyres slashed as the vandals caused thousands of pounds of damage to dozens of cars in Kingswinford, Gornal and Sedgley.

Officers say it is too early to say if the incidents are all linked but they are not ruling it out and believe a dark coloured estate car may be involved in a large number of offences.

Meanwhile, a £200 reward for information has been put up for information which leads to the offender being caught.

One woman who lives in Redstone Way in Lower Gornal said all tyres on both her cars were slashed on her driveway in the early hours of Christmas Eve.

Five other cars were damaged in the road, plus vehicles in Sandstone Close and Holloway Street, from December 24 to 27.

The campaign to find the culprits has been backed by Upper Gornal and Woodsett's Councillor Dean Perks. Police are looking at CCTV footage.

Park to get path network

A £70,000 project to create a series of new footpaths through a Cradley park has been approved. The work will be carried out at Homer Hill Park to improve access for its many visitors.

Council leader Pete Lowe has agreed to include the project in the authority's work programme.

The five new paths will be made in or around the perimeter of the park and will join up with the existing network of walking routes.

Some of the cash has come from the sale of the former crematorium lodge in Chase Road, Lower Gornal.

New dance venue

WEDNESDAY evening tea dances were due to start again at Dudley College, Broadway Campus, this week after a change of venue. The dances had been held at Dudley Town Hall but a new venue was needed when the hall was closed for urgent repairs to the ceiling.

Motorway coach crash driver banned and fined

A COACH driver has been banned from driving after he fell asleep at the wheel and crashed off the M5 while carrying dozens of Black Country children.

Robert Blakemore, 60, from Wolverhampton, was driving 53 passengers from Dudley, Wolverhampton and West Bromwich, on a day out to the seaside, when the coach veered off the motorway into a ditch in Gloucestershire in August last year. HE pleaded guilty to driving without due care and attention at Stroud Magistrates' Court last week.

SEVEN people – one child and six adults,

including Blakemore – suffered minor injuries during the incident.

The coach was operated by Lye-based Prospect Coaches.

It had been taking a group of youngsters from Bright Futures Children's Centre in West Bromwich for a day out at Weston-super-Mare.

Licence

Children and teachers from across the Black Country had been looking forward to the day at the Somerset resort.

Blakemore was seen by passengers to

have his eyes shut and chin resting on his chest at the time of the crash, magistrates were told.

He told the court that he was currently on sick pay and unable to work because of a broken leg suffered in the crash.

He added that losing his licence would mean he would lose his job.

The coach was operated by Lye-based Prospect Coaches. It had been taking a group of youngsters from Bright Futures Children's Centre in West Bromwich for a day out at Weston-super-Mare.

In witness statements, three passengers

said Blakemore woke when the coach was drifting towards the hard shoulder and a girl screamed, Stroud Magistrates' Court heard.

No mechanical defect was found with the coach and breath tests indicated he had not been drinking. Mr Blakemore, who is diabetic, said he 'did not black out'.

He was handed a 15 month ban, fined £165 and ordered to take an extended test.

Two of the other Prospect Coaches travelling to Weston continued on to the seaside, while another turned back to the Black Country.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Auction bid to cut home energy bills

DUDLEY Council is urging residents to take advantage of a scheme to save on energy bills.

The council's big switch campaign is part of a national initiative which sees energy companies bidding at auction to offer the best tariffs to residents who participate in the council co-ordinated scheme. Residents then have the option of switching.

The next auction will take place on February 3 and residents need to sign up before February 2 to take part. Call 0300 555 2345 or visit www.dudley.gov.uk

Group revamp a charity's garden

AN engineering group has overhauled the outdoor space at a charity's centre for disabled children in Lyne.

Caparo Industries is supporting KIDS, the national charity for disabled children and young people. The business, which has more than 40 sites nationwide including Stourbridge, Wolverhampton, Oldbury and West Bromwich, provided the charity's Orchard Centre with funding and support for its garden improvement.

Thousands apply for firefighter jobs

MORE than 3,600 people applied for 50 firefighters jobs with West Midlands Fire Service.

Officials say they are staggered by the figures which also revealed 5,917 people initially registered their interest in the positions during the recruitment drive. It comes as the service has lost 275 firefighters in the past four years as a result of £22 million cuts in funding.

Trains in demand on heritage line

MORE than 30,000 passengers climbed aboard steam trains along the Severn Valley Railway for the heritage line's Christmas special.

The railway is now closed while essential maintenance work is carried out on the Bridgnorth to Kidderminster line and will reopen for half term, from February 14.

Bus fleet revamp

SCORES of new buses will be on the road across the West Midlands in coming weeks.

National Express West Midlands is investing £34 million on 171 new British built buses.

House sharing scheme is designed for young people

A SCHEME helping young people to find their own home has been launched in Dudley.

A new shared housing programme will be trialled in central Dudley and Lower Gornal, tailored to the needs of young people aged 18 to 35. Dudley Council is running the pilot scheme in partnership with Black Country Housing Group and Churches Housers Association of Dudley and District.

DVLA delays need to be investigated

DUDLEY MP Ian Austin has called on the Government to act after unearthing evidence of soaring delays in DVLA applications.

Figures released at the request of the Dudley North MP revealed a total of 185 people had been kept waiting six months before their application was processed during 2013/14, ten times as many as the previous year.

The Labour politician launched an investigation after receiving complaints from his constituents, including some who said they had been unable to drive for six months.

More than 8,500 complaints have been made against the organisation during 2014/15, it was revealed.

Mr Austin has written to Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin, urging him to investigate the matter. He said: "These delays are unbelievable. I've heard from local people who haven't been able to drive for six months because for delays to their application. This isn't just a minor inconvenience. I've told government to get to the bottom of this."

Self-contained rooms will be available in shared houses, specifically for young people. They will be provided with their own private bedroom with an en-suite bathroom, bed and small fridge. Some may also have a microwave and kettle.

The rest of the house will be shared with other tenants, who will have a shared kitchen and in some cases a garden.

Lifestyle

A selection and matching process will also look at lifestyle preferences and things such as working hours and sleeping patterns to match potential residents together as house mates.

Housing boss Councillor Gaye Partridge said: "We recognise that many young people want or need to make the move to independent living but struggle to find suitable and affordable places to live. We have developed this shared housing option specifically for young people to test the market.

"If it proves a success we may look to roll the scheme out across Dudley borough."

To qualify for the shared houses people must meet and agree to share with the other selected residents. They must also be aged between 18 and 35 and have lived or worked in Dudley borough continuously for the last two years.

Concert celebrates master of mirth



Barry Smith, Doug Parker, Marlene, Maggie O'Hara, Aynuk and Mel Thomas prepare for the concert at Brierley Hill

MASTER of mirth Tommy Mundon, who died in July aged 80, will be celebrated by friends and colleagues from his 50-year career at a charity show in his memory.

Black Country entertainers Aynuk, Doug Parker and Marlene are just some of the acts on the bill for the show in Brierley Hill next month.

Veteran comedian Tommy died after a five-year battle with Parkinson's Disease. Aynuk, real name Alan Smith, together with friend Doug

Parker had discussed with Tommy a raise money for the hospice while also remembering Tommy."

Following Tommy's death, the pair together with singer Maggie O'Hara have revived the idea for a show to raise cash for the hospice in Hagley Road, Stourbridge.

Mr Smith said: "I worked with Tommy for more than 50 years and it has been a long time since we have all done a show together but we are going to get back together to help

raise money for the hospice while also remembering Tommy."

The show is at Brierley Hill Civic Hall, Bank Street, on February 17, from 7.30pm. Tickets are priced £12 per person. These can be purchased from the Mary Stevens Hospice Fundraising Office on (01384) 377778 or the box office on 0870 230 7000.

More than 500 well-wishers attended Tommy's memorial service held at Halesowen Methodist Church in Halesowen in August.

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IN MY VIEW



with Mark Andrews

KATIE Hopkins, the one-time Apprentice candidate who now plies her trade trying to offend as many people as she possibly can with vitriolic comments on Twitter, surely hit a new low with her diatribe about Pauline Cafferkey.

Pauline is the Scottish nurse who contracted Ebola after taking part in an aid mission to help sufferers in Sierra Leone.

Whatever one's views of the mission, the risks involved, or the screening process for people returning from Sierra Leone, referring to somebody whose life is in grave danger as a "sweaty Glaswegian Ebola bomb" is surely beyond the pale.

And, I would venture to suggest, a nurse who has put her life on the line to help save others, demonstrates far more courage than somebody whose main claim to fame is appearing on a television reality show and making snide remarks about northern car salesmen.

Nevertheless, I'm totally with Hopkins when she says the police should have better things to do than become embroiled in the row about her online bile.

Defend

Detective Inspector Glyn Roberts of Police Scotland said: "Inquiries are ongoing into the nature of these tweets and to establish any potential criminality."

What? Inquiries are ongoing? Her rant consisted of 19 words. How long does it take to investigate that?

And how can there possibly be any criminality in a few rude words about the Scots' propensity to perspire?

Hopkins has hit back, saying 'the freedom to say only things that are polite is no real freedom of speech at all', and while it pains me to say it, the old trout has hit the nail on the head.

The French philosopher Voltaire famously said: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

And the police – not to mention the 'hundreds' of people who complained about her tweets – would do well to take that on board.

Most right-thinking people will disapprove of what Hopkins has to say on many things.

She makes her living trying gain people's disapproval, and of course they play right into her hands every time they rise to the bait.

But if we really do value the freedom of speech which we have taken for granted for centuries, we must all defend her right to be rude and unpleasant.

Det Insp Roberts should have told the hundreds of complainants to get a life – and then instructed his officers to catch some real criminals instead.



Mr Dury holds a find while looking over the site of the dig



The Webb Corbett Factory and cone in the 1940s



Decorative glass bottle stops that were found

WEEK IN POLITICS



with Daniel Wainwright

FOUR million conversations are what the Labour party's leader says it must hold between now and polling day.

Between them, shadow chancellor Ed Balls and shadow work and pensions secretary Rachel Reeves clocked up a few of those in Staffordshire and the Black Country this week.

With no party commanding an overall majority in the Commons, the run-up to the May 7 General Election is going to be something of a level playing field between Labour and the Conservatives.

They both need to hold on to every seat they won last time and to win even more if they are to avoid another compromise-laden coalition.

Both are losing votes to other parties, specifically UKIP, the Greens and the SNP (north of the border, obviously).

Hence Miss Reeves played the consolidation game in Dudley North, the most marginal Labour seat in the Black Country while Mr Balls headed for Cannock Chase.

The latter was the scene of a symbolic defeat, at least in numerical terms, for Labour. It's where the Tories saw the largest swing to them in 2010.

It contains, in theory, the largest proportion of voters who were prepared to desert one party for its arch enemy. If Labour can win this back, it stands to reason it can win back others as well.

In the 1990s we had Essex Man, the typical voter described as 'working class, father, electrician, right-wing, keen hanger, noisily rambunctious, no subtlety'. Then Tony Blair came up with another type of voter, the so-called Mondo Man.

"His dad voted Labour," he said. "He used to vote Labour, too. But he'd bought his own house now. He'd set up his own business. He was doing very nicely. So I've become a Tory," he said. In that moment, he crystallised for me the basis of our failure. His instinct was to get on in life. And he thought our instincts were to stop him."

In both Labour visits to the Black Country and Staffordshire, the front-benchers met apprentices. Under Mr Blair there was a drive to get half of young people into higher education. Now there's a renewed interest in apprenticeships to give employers the skilled workforce they need.

While Mr Balls was tinkering around on a go-kart with two student mechanics at South Staffordshire College it occurred to me that Cannock Mechanic could well determine the outcome of this election.

Whether it's the young voter or their parent or grandparent, all of them want to know if the younger ones are going to have a chance to get on in life, get a job and make a contribution. The big debate will be how that happens. The parties have just under four months to convince us.

Through looking glass into the past

Stourbridge was at the centre of the glass industry, CHARLIE BENTON looks at relics recently found

DEDICATED volunteers have spent hours sifting through tons of soil to uncover an array of hidden gems from Stourbridge's glass industry heritage.

An eight-month long excavation on the site of the Ruskin Mill Glasshouse College has unearthed examples of glassware dating back hundreds of years and evidence of two of the region's earliest furnaces.

Now some of the window glass, bottles, tiles, cut lead crystal and carriage lantern lenses which have been dug up will be going on public display.

Stourbridge was once the epicentre of the UK's glass-making industry, renowned the world over for its high-quality glass products since the early 1600s.

The remains of furnaces discovered at the site would have been in the shape of distinctive cones similar to the Red House Glass Cone that stands in nearby Wordsley. Such glass cones once dominated the skyline of the area. The two found at the Ruskin site date back to 1691 and 1692 respectively.

The site forms part of The Glasshouse, formally known as the Ruskin Glass Centre, which serves as a working homage to the glass trade.

The dig was carried out by volunteers as well as 90 students from the college in Wollaston Road with special educational needs.

Among the items uncovered are bottles which date back to the 1700s, decorative glass from the 1850s and clay pipes.

Glass heritage director at the college Ian Dury, aged 61, of Kinver, said: "It has been amazing and what we have dis-



Glass Heritage Officer Ian Dury with finds from the college dig in Stourbridge

covered is a time capsule of glass making on the site for the past 400 years so we really did find all sorts of things, from windows to bottles.

Condition

"Although of course a lot of the pieces were shattered, the glass itself was in very good condition as once it is underground it stays quite stable."

Many pieces will now be put on display.

Mr Dury said: "We had archaeologists and glass specialists take a look

at what we found and they were very impressed. Although we put a lot of it back, there were a lot of pieces that will be kept. Some of it will be sent to museums and some of it will be kept at the college itself."

"In May we will be holding a special international glass festival and it would be great to display it then."

He added: "We found lots of window glass, lots of pieces of bottles and tiles and decorative glass."

"Anything that can be made in glass has been made here for 420 years. The

first cones were built in 1691 and 1692 and then they built another cone on top of it."

"The main facility was built in the 1930s. It has constantly been in use as a glass making facility for 400 years.

"It is a timeless art, the same equipment that was used then is still used today."

Mr Dury, originally from South Wales, said he has been working in the glass industry for almost 50 years.

He said: "It was absolutely fantastic to be a part of the dig. The funding we received from English Heritage and the National Lottery allowed us to do a lot of research to find out just what we were digging up."

"There were over 16 glass cones in the area alone at one stage and it has enriched the area so much."

Ruskin Mill stands on the site of the former Webb Corbett glassworks which operated between 1913 and 1969.

It was taken over by Royal Doulton which operated until it was sold in 1999 to the Ruskin Mill trust.

Mr Dury has paid tribute to the work of volunteers who turned out to help. He said: "We started the dig in February last year and we had funding from English Heritage and National Lottery."

"For the first couple of weeks I was tasked with finding volunteers and although I was worried initially I shouldn't have been, as we had so many people come out to help us dig."

"We have 90 students with special educational needs here at the college, they have absolutely loved doing it and taking part."

"The first two weeks was all about getting volunteers from elsewhere, I was concerned at first but the turnout was amazing. There were more than enough volunteers and other schools came out and got involved."

"We are also interested in inviting schools to come along and take a look at what we found. The glass that was made here can be found in all sorts of places."

Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people

money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.'

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people

I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!



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Fox hunting is nothing but barbaric

WITH regard to the letter in the Chronicle by Mr Waldron of Dudley where he makes statements and opines (yes, opines) certain things regarding fox hunting and the column by Peter Rhodes.

Mr Waldron can opine on anything he likes but the fact is that ten years ago a big majority of MPs voted to outlaw fox hunting. Fox hunting is nothing but barbaric blood lust practised by a small section of the population. It has nothing to do with the defence of chickens or lambs. It is purely to satisfy some people's desire for a fox to be

S HUNT
Dudley

Speeders are being punished

FURTHER to recent letters criticising speeding drivers, it was a surprise to see the figure of 91,138 people caught speeding in 2014.

Maybe those drivers we see going too fast are not getting away with it after all. Interesting that since a lot of the big yellow boxes have been switched off, more offenders than ever have been caught. This proves the problem with fixed cameras that they only slow the traffic for a few yards. Now mobile cameras and unmarked cars are being used.

I would say to drivers, even if you are not bothered about road safety, it is important to realise that one offence will increase your insurance costs, two offences and you will find it impossible to purchase insurance from many companies and also car hire will be difficult.

Also many jobs ask for a clean driving licence, so take it easy, save fuel, save wear on your car, and maybe even save a life.

R GWILLIAMS
Brierley Hill

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

E-MAIL

Dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

GP appointments cause A&E crisis

IS it any wonder our NHS is overwhelmed with people going to hospital accident and emergency departments because they cannot get to see their GP?

To see your GP you have to be prepared to wait a fortnight because of an appointment system that is just not working.

Not too long ago all people had to do when they were sick was to attend their doctor's surgery and sit and wait their turn.

Then the experts got involved and came up with the great idea of an appointment system.

All this has done is to cause a bottleneck with a flood of patients all trying to get through a funnel of that bottle.

Surely it would be bet-

ter had the old systems not been deemed unfit by these so-called experts.

After all, that system worked far longer than this system we have now, which is in crisis after just a few years.

Not all new systems are good.

All it takes is for those who made the decision to admit they were wrong and revert to the trusted and well-tested system.

This would then free up our hospital accident and emergency departments to a workable and reliable service — one that is wanted by the general public.

With the number of 'hand car washes' that are now on our streets, do the police and ambulance services have any excuses? Surely someone in authority at these services can 'do a deal' if small cars can be washed for about £3 and 4x4s for £6.

P LOWE
Brierley Hill

P COLE
Kingswinford

Not classed as vermin

J B Waldron claims that the majority of the population is in favour of the repeal of the fox hunting ban. I would like to know what he bases that assertion on. Most of the people I know have exactly the opposite opinion.

I would also like to know how often he has lambs or chickens destroyed by foxes.

The fox is not officially classed as vermin and is part of our natural eco-system, which is more than you can say for the plague of domestic cats that live by me.

I agree that we should let the people who manage our countryside choose the best way to manage 'pests', but even many of the people who enjoy fox hunting would not claim that it is a particularly efficient way if eradicating foxes.

ALAN ASHMAN
Sedgley

Police cars need clean up

YEARS ago, all police cars, fire engines and ambulances used to be kept in a very clean condition. Nowadays, only the fire engines look presentable.

Unless a police car is to be used by a senior officer, the cars and ambulances are a disgrace.

With the number of 'hand car washes' that are now on our streets, do the police and ambulance services have any excuses? Surely someone in authority at these services can 'do a deal' if small cars can be washed for about £3 and 4x4s for £6.

P COLE
Kingswinford

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Author's book looks at Zeebrugge tragedy

IT was a tragedy that shook the world.

On the evening of March 6, 1987, the Herald of Free Enterprise set off from the Belgian port of Zeebrugge destined for Dover carrying 459 passengers and a crew of 80. It would never arrive.

Just 23 minutes of leaving the port the ferry capsized when water cascaded into the car deck after the bow doors were mistakenly left open. A total of 193 people lost their lives.

Memories of the disaster have inspired a first book by author Iain Yardley, of Temple Street, Lower Gornal, entitled 'Ninety Seconds at Zeebrugge: The Herald of Free Enterprise Story'.

Mr Yardley had travelled on the Herald of Free Enterprise on a school trip the year before aged 14 and so the tragedy left a lasting impression.

Impact

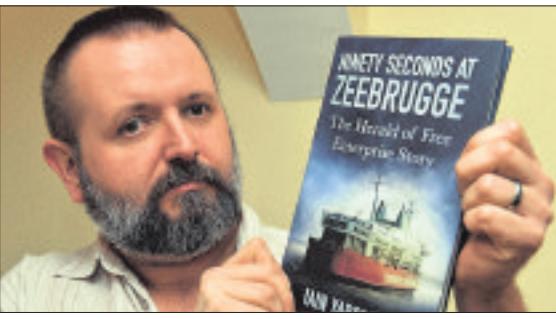
He said: "I think it left such an impact because it was ordinary people like me who died. I could have been on board."

The 42-year-old has spoken to more than 20 survivors, as well as staff from hospitals that treated the casualties, in compiling the book, which took Mr Yardley eight years to write.

To make contact with the survivors, he researched memorials set up in tribute to the victims as well as funds set up in their names. He also put out appeals for people to contact him in the letters pages of local newspapers.

He said: "I just wanted to get it right, which was why it took so long. I could have rehashed a lot of information that people already knew but I didn't want to do that. What I really wanted to do was tell the stories that people hadn't read about, or thought about before."

Mr Yardley, who designs and commissions scrap metal furnaces, said



Author Iain Yardley, of Lower Gornal, with his new book about the ferry disaster



Capsized — the stricken vessel after the disaster that killed 193 people in 1987

he there had been a lack of literature available on the tragedy.

A number of poignant stories

emerged from Mr Yardley's research into the passengers, such as British Army personnel returning after serving in Germany. One family was returning to be at the bedside of their

dying father and another was bringing their baby daughter home to be chris-

tened. Mr Yardley added: "The book is a recalling of the disaster and the immediate aftermath from the point of view of the people who were involved."

A public inquiry was critical of operator Townsend Thoresen and the design of the ship.

The book is available via History

Press for £20, online at Amazon for £16.10 or £12 for the Kindle edition.

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Four schools join forces in new trust



Ounsdale High School Sixth Form principal Christine Brown, Edgecliff High School headteacher Chris Rogers, Ellowes Hall Sports College headteacher Alan Jasper, Invictus Academy Trust Executive Headteacher Andy Griffiths and Crestwood School Head Tony Bowles

ONE of the highest performing schools in Dudley has formed a trust with three other schools. Ellowes Hall Sports College has formed the Invictus Trust with Edgecliff High School in Kinver, Crestwood School in Kingswinford and Ounsdale High School and Sixth Form, Wombourne.

The trust will be led by Andy Griffiths, headteacher at

Council app a download hit

MORE than 1,000 people have downloaded a mobile app which lets them report concerns to Dudley Council.

Dudley Council's app, which was first made available in November, allows residents to send in pictures of potholes, dumped rubbish, faulty street lights and graffiti.

The app also lets council house tenants send in pictures with reports of housing repairs they require.

Councillor Stuart Turner, cabinet member for finance and information and communication technology at Dudley Council, said: "The app is just one of the channels we have introduced to ensure that contacting the council is as easy and convenient as possible.

"We're very pleased that it has been

received so well and we hope even more people will continue to download it and make the most of the services it offers."

The app, created as part of the council's Love Your Community campaign, also keeps residents updated with council news as well as bus and train times.

The app can be downloaded via the App Store for iPhone or the Google Play Store on Android phones.

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No decision over future of society

Kingswinford and District
Historical Society

A TOTAL of 35 members and friends attended the December meeting of the society.

This started with the 23rd Annual General Meeting and was followed by humorous monologues by Graham Fardon and ended with refreshments and wine.

A presentation was made to Brenda Arthur who retired as chairman of the society after serving on the committee from its beginning.

Unfortunately at the AGM, no decision was made about the group's future. No new officers and committee members were elected, but an Extraordinary General Meeting as being held on Monday January 6.

Anyone interested in keeping the society active is asked to call Ron Julian 01384 295848.

Group holds two meetings

Fuchsia Society

THE Black Country Fuchsia Society has two meetings this month.

The first is a plant clinic/surgery on Tuesday, January 20. Bring your plants along. The second is on January 27. Both are at 7.30pm for an 8pm start.

Meetings are at Corpus Christi Social Centre, Griffiths Drive, Ashmore Park. Visit www.blackcountryfuchsiasociety.weebly.com

Laughter prompted by ukulele ladies

Coven WI

DECEMBER was a busy month for Coven WI.

The club meeting was well supported and, when all formal business was concluded, the Christmas party celebrations were started.

The entertainment was member-led with party games followed by a group of ladies strumming their ukuleles. There was audience participation and everyone was encouraged to sing along from song sheets. Laughter echoed around the hall.

After enjoying a sumptuous buffet provided by members, many then entered the best wrapped parcel competition. Everyone received a Christmas present and donations made in lieu of sending Christmas cards will go the WI's chosen charity.

On December 12, some members supported a fund-raising event at Coven Memorial Hall from the St Paul's Church roof fund.

On December 22nd Coven members joined in the Ring Hills Carol Service at St Peter's Church, Codsall Wood, with mince pies in the village hall to finish.

Social studies group talk simply magic

Penn TG

speaker Neil Roberts gave a very interesting talk about magicians.

He received a magic set as a boy and practised the tricks. He had also been interested in theatre and drama but eventually became a professional magician and joined the Magic Circle.

The Gardening Group celebrated Christmas with lunch at the Woodman, near Claverley. The guild's Christmas Party was very enjoyable with everyone bringing a plate of food and desserts supplied by the committee.

On January 28, Alan Bennett will talk on the business life of a butcher.

Meetings are held at Penn United Community Hall, Penn Road at 7.15pm.

Party game with a difference

Trysull & Seisdon WI

divided those present into groups for an hilarious version of pass the parcel, where the parcel was passed right or left depending on what was read out. It got faster as it went along and the winner of each group was the one holding the parcel at the end.

The party finished with Christmas quizzes devised by Clare Preece.

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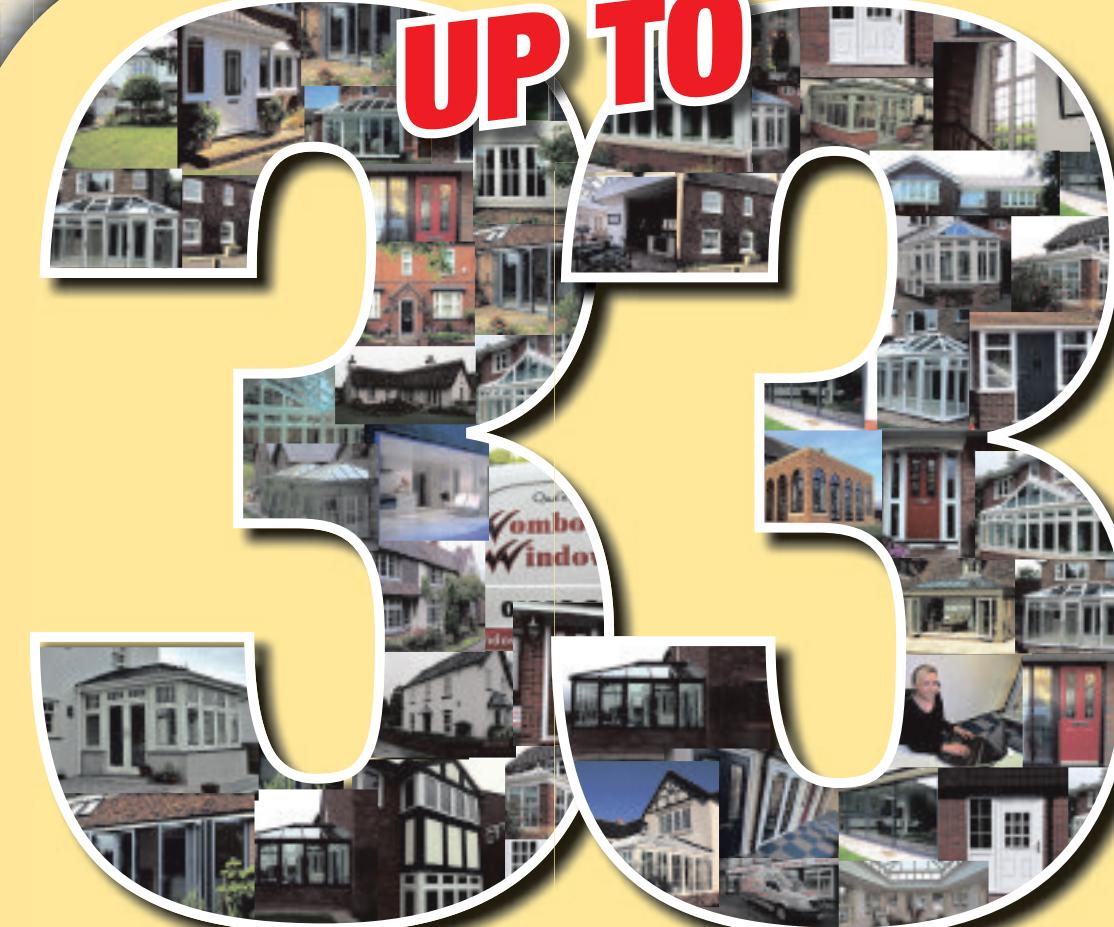
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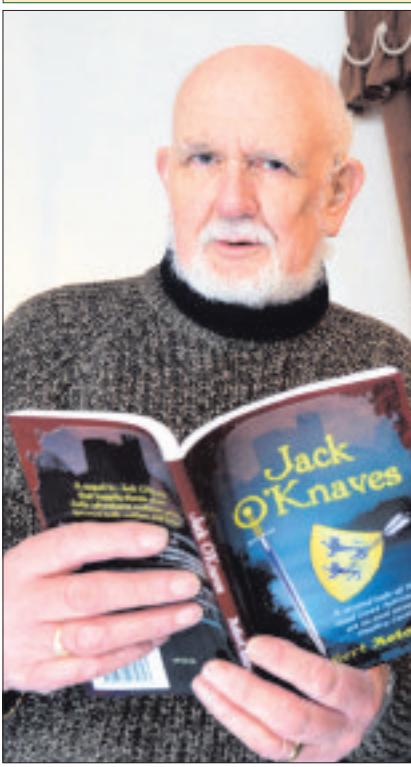
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Probe urged into repeat calls to ambulance service

Jack's back in tale of medieval Dudley



Author and historian Robert Aston, from Coseley, has written his second book set in medieval Dudley

AN author is releasing the second instalment of a series of novellas set in the Black Country of the 1300s.

Robert Aston's first book, Jack O'Beans, was the story of young hero Jack's attempt to establish himself as a soldier. His second book, Jack O'Knaves, sees Jack, now enrolled as a guard at Dudley Castle, eloping with the Steward of Dudley Priory's daughter.

Born in Oxford, Mr Aston has spent most of his life in the Black Country brought up in Dudley by his grandmother after his mother died and his father moved to Australia without him.

A former mechanical engineer, upon retirement Mr Aston took a creative writing course in Dudley. His character Jack is inspired by his own childhood experiences and early obsession with Errol Flynn's portrayal of the outlaw hero Robin Hood. "I'm really interested in trying to publicise the medieval history of Dudley," said Mr Aston, whose books can be purchased online or at local history centres.

Queen ready to rock city with their new singer

QUEEN with singer Adam Lambert are in concert at Birmingham city centre's Barclaycard Arena next Friday, following their acclaimed televised New Year's Eve concert in London.

The California-raised American Idol finalist has been described by Queen guitarist Brian May as "a gift from God", the first singer they've found who is capable of filling the band's frontman role since the death of Freddie Mercury in 1991 aged 45.

The 32-year-old from San Diego, who topped the US chart in 2012 with his second album Trespassing, is not keen to make the com-

parison. He has been quoted as saying: "There's never going to be another. I'm trying to share with the audience how much he inspired me."

Lambert auditioned for the eighth series of American Idol in 2009 by singing Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody.

Tickets

He went on to finish as runner-up to Kris Allen but in the final performed Queen classic We Are The Champions alongside Brian May and Roger Taylor of Queen.

Tickets start at £67 for the concert at the former NIA.

A WEST Midlands Euro MP has called for an investigation into nuisance 999 calls after it emerged paramedics were called to one property in Stourbridge more than 200 times in 12 months.

West Midlands Ambulance Service was called to an address in the town 231 times for 'falls', according to details revealed through a Freedom of Information request.

The service revealed its paramedics and ambulance crews were called out 5,000 times to the same 30 addresses in the region.

Another property in Birmingham's Shard End area was visited on 653 occasions with only 11 of the call-outs resulting in anyone being taken to hospital. Of the calls, more than 400 were described as being for 'someone feeling generally unwell'.

By Andrew Turton

In one incident, the paramedics were forced to race to the address to discover the resident merely had a headache.

West Midlands MEP Bill Etheridge, who is also a councillor in Dudley, urged authorities to look at the issue.

"Without knowing the personal circumstances of the caller it would be unfair to make a judgement but it seems to me either the person involved has a serious health condition, in which case they have been let down by the authorities, or they are a malicious prankster," said the UKIP MEP.

"Either way there should be an investigation into the caller and either better care provided or criminal charges brought for wasting the emergency services time."

"Our emergency services are overstretched as it is this kind of problem

must not be tolerated or accepted as it could easily put lives at risk."

"Irresponsible prank callers are literally playing games with people's lives and should receive the most severe punishment the law allows. There is no excuse for this criminal stupidity."

The figures, obtained by a Freedom of Information request, do not reveal specific addresses due to data protection laws.

A spokesman for West Midlands Ambulance Service said: "The trust is aware of a number of high-volume service users who regularly call the ambulance service.

"Some people do suffer from complex health-related disorders that, at times, require emergency intervention on a regular basis. Although this may appear to be a 'misuse' of resources it is indeed entirely appropriate and embraces the ethos of delivery of high-quality patient care."

COPLES planning to tie the knot can get inspired with a wedding open day at Himley Hall.

The picturesque hall, which is licensed to hold civil wedding and partnership ceremonies, will open its doors on Sunday from 11am to 4pm.

Couples and their families can take a look around the historic venue.

Earl

There will also be a chance to see the beautifully refurbished art-deco style North Wing, which once housed the Earl of Dudley's swimming pool and cinema.

Himley Hall's wedding co-ordinators and catering team will be available to discuss the options available to couples. Registrars

from the Staffordshire Registration Service will be on hand to guide them through the civil ceremony process.

Admission is free but there is a small parking fee. Refreshments will be available.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environment and culture, said: "Himley Hall's wedding packages offer tremendous value for money in a luxury setting that is completely unique."

"The open day gives couples the opportunity to see the beautiful hall exactly as it looks for wedding ceremonies as well as the chance to meet the wedding team."

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More are urged to have a say on cutbacks

DUDLEY Council wants more people to have a say on the services which matter most to them, as bosses consider almost £60 million worth of cuts.

About 2,700 people have so far responded to a consultation after residents were asked to name their top five council services.

The council is proposing savings of £22.9m for 2015/16, moving up to £25.3m by 2016/17 and £27.4m by 2017/18. But the authority has warned that a further £30m of savings will also need to be found.

It wants to minimise their impact by focusing on the services which are seen as the least important to everyday lives.

Consultation

Councillor Stuart Turner, cabinet member for finance, said: "We would urge people to have their say in our Big Question budget consultation before the closing date on January 25.

"We've been really pleased with the response so far as nearly 2,700 people have already taken part but we want as many people as possible to have their say.

By Richard Guttridge

"We're having to set budgets on the back of huge cuts in our funding from central government, so we are asking the residents we serve to take a moment to let us know their top five most valued services."

The budget proposals so far include a shake-up of Dudley youth services to save £200,000. There are also plans to increase burial fees, turn off some street lights after midnight and reduce park maintenance.

Savings will also be made by transferring the management of the New Bradley Hall care home in Kingswinford to a private firm.

People can take part by visiting www.dudley.gov.uk or by using #dudleybudget on Twitter.

Nominate unsung heroes for awards



Mayor of Dudley Councillor Margaret Aston at the launch of this year's civic awards for unsung heroes

MAYOR of Dudley, Councillor Margaret Aston, is urging people to highlight the work of unsung heroes across the borough for prestigious civic awards.

Community activists, inspiring teachers, entrepreneurs, athletes and environmental champions will be recognised in the Mayor's Civic Awards. People can nominate those who go above and beyond the call of duty in their communities for one of the awards but the deadline is February 9.

There are six categories: the Duncan Edwards award for sport, the Cedric Hardwicke award for arts, the Frank Foley award for community spirit, the Thomas Attwood award for education, the Mike Holder award for business and the William Shenstone award for environment.

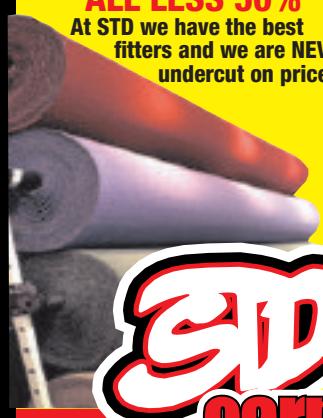
Councillor Aston said: "The Mayor's Civic Awards is a fantastic opportunity to highlight the work of the people who work tirelessly in their communities for the good of the borough." Nominate online at dudley.gov.uk/civicawards or pick up a form from libraries and leisure centres.

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Cancer charity shop is revamped

A CHARITY shop in Dudley will be closed this week while it undergoes a major refurbishment.

Big changes have been promised at the Cancer Research store, in Castle Street. The shop, which sells a range of products including clothes and CDs, raises funds for the cancer charity.

It is due to be officially reopened by the town's mayor. Councillor Margaret Aston will cut the ribbon at the revamped store on Tuesday, January 27.

The updates to the shop aren't the only changes that are being made. It will reopen as a discount store, with nothing priced over £3.

Store manager Reah Robinson said the revamp at the shop was long overdue.

She said: "We are the leading charity in the country and our shop has been running for more than 20 years.

"Our shop at the moment is quite dated and in desperate need of a refurbishment.

"The transformation is going to be a big one.

"Many of us who work and shop in the store have personally been effected by cancer and really want our shop to be a success for the charity as a whole to fight cancer all across the country."

Sponsor for snooker ace

A TALENTED Black Country snooker player is set to play in a prestigious national tournament following a donation from his local councillor.

Richard Haney, aged 18, will take his place in the English Amateur Snooker Championships after Sedgley ward Councillor Bill Etheridge, who is also a UKIP Euro MP, pledged £120 from his council allowance.

Mr Haney, who lives in Kings Road, Sedgley, also plans to take part in other tournaments including the English Ranking Series, Premier Junior Tour and the English Under 21's Snooker Championship.

Cannabis found

MORE than 600 cannabis plants with a street value of £250,000 were uncovered by police at a house during an investigation.

Three people were arrested after officers found 634 plants at the property in Factory Road, Tipton, on Thursday.

Call for lantern ban after inferno

Rachel replaces pregnant Frankie

A BAN on Chinese sky lanterns — as seen in the movie Tangled — are set to cover parts of the Black Country, as councils fear fires caused by the contraptions.

One of the popular paper devices, which use the heat of a small flame to take off into the night sky, caused £6 million of damage at Smethwick's Jayplas recycling plant in 2013, turning the site into an inferno of molten plastic in one of the biggest fires to hit the West Midlands.

Popular

The floating lanterns have become hugely popular in recent years, at weddings, new year celebrations and memorial events.

Wolverhampton City Council is to discuss the possibility of restricting the use of sky lanterns at marriage venues and on council property. Sandwell Council has been calling for the lanterns to be banned by the Government after the Smethwick blaze. West Midlands Fire Service is also calling for a review of the legislation.

Minister's sweet choice on job scheme visit



Employment Minister Esther McVey eyes up the deserts at the Brewers Fayre and Premier Inn, Stourbridge

A GOVERNMENT minister believed she had the perfect recipe to help the region's young unemployed during a visit to a new hotel and pub restaurant in Stourbridge.

Esther McVey, minister of state for employment, visited the Premier Inn and Brewers Fayre in Birmingham Street, where she met some of the 16 employees who had graduated from a Government-backed scheme called Sector-based Work Academies.

The Wirral West Conservative MP also took a tour of the hotel and eyed up some tasty cakes in the restaurant.

The aim of the Government initiative is to provide unemployed youngsters with training in the hospitality sector and the chance to have a jobs taster for a number of weeks, with a guaranteed job interview.

A total of 60 jobs were created at the site, which opened on December 18.

Two of the graduates who spoke to the minister about their experience on the scheme were Joshua Pagett, aged 20 and Samantha Taylor, aged 18.

Mr Pagett, of Kingswinford, had been unemployed for a year. He said: "The big difference the job has made for me has been the boost in confidence."

STRICTLY Come Dancing finalist Frankie Bridge has reluctantly had to step down from the top TV show's live tour, which opens tomorrow night (Friday) at the Barclaycard Arena in Birmingham.

The Saturday star is pregnant with her second child but has a condition which can affect the early months of pregnancy, so has been advised by her doctor not to take part in the dance show tour.

Her replacement will be Rachel Stevens. She was runner-up in the 2008 BBC1 series and went on to dance around the country in the 2009 Strictly Tour and more recently appeared in the 2014 Christmas Special.

Strictly champion Caroline Flack, fellow finalists Simon Webbe and Mark Wright, together with Scott Mills, Alison Hammond and Thom Evans will be taking part. The new judging panel features the 2008 Strictly winners Tom Chambers and Camilla Dallerup, who join TV judge Craig Revel Horwood. Zoe Ball completes the line-up as host.

Card cloning concern after fraud attempts in Pakistan

FRAUDSTERS have targeted shoppers in a spate of card cloning incidents in Sedgley.

Victims said they had been contacted by their banks, who told them criminals had attempted to withdraw cash in Pakistan using the UK accounts.

Prior to them being targeted the victims had used their debit cards at a shops and cashpoints in Sedgley, and all said they had used the cash machine at the town's Midcounties Co-Operative store. The claims were made on community Facebook site Spotted: Sedgley.

Christine Jones, aged 51, of Kinloch Drive, Dudley said she had used her card at cash machines at the Tesco Express in Highland Road and the Co-Op store and had then received a phone call from her bank, Santander, asking her to get in touch.

She was told someone had tried to withdraw £160 in Multan, Pakistan,

By Dominic Bareham

but the transaction was stopped by the bank and her card cancelled.

The incident meant Mrs Jones, who lives with her husband Alan, could not withdraw money from cash machines while waiting at least 10 days for a new card.

Attempt

Adam Wilkins, 27, of Dudley Road, Sedgley was another victim. He said: "It was a bit of an inconvenience but my bank, Barclays, sorted it all out."

He said staff at the bank told him he was not the first customer to visit complaining about card cloning. He believed his card had been cloned at the Co-Op store in Sedgley, adding that an attempt was made to withdraw £66 from an address called 'New Muslim LMC' in Pakistan.

Alan White, a spokesman for Barclays, said fraudsters could clone the magnetic strip and pick up the PIN, but could not clone the card's chip, adding that if they then attempted to use the cloned card in the UK, the system would pick up the fact that the card was incorrect.

He believed that as the attempt to withdraw the cash had been made in Pakistan, the bank's IT systems would have detected an unusual transaction, especially if the previous attempt to withdraw money from the account had been made in the UK only a few hours before. "We have got a very sophisticated fraud detection system in place and we have notified the customer and has told us that the transaction was not genuine," Mr White added.

The Midcounties Co-Operative said the firm had not received any complaints about the cashpoint but advised anyone using a cash machine to be vigilant.

Shed is wrecked by blaze

A GARDEN shed was destroyed by fire after a portable heater was blown over in strong winds.

The homeowner, a man in his 50s, was unable to put the fire out as it spread quickly in the shed.

Crews were called to the house in Alpine Close, Netherton, at around 2pm on Friday.

Just a shell of the shed remained after the fire was extinguished, with a garage, fence panels and a neighbour's greenhouse also damaged.

Brierley Hill Fire Station crew commander Tom Edwards said: "The guy was heating up some bait with a portable heater, he was going fishing, and in the high winds it has blown over."

"He only left it for a second, it spread that quickly."

"We could see the smoke from the station."

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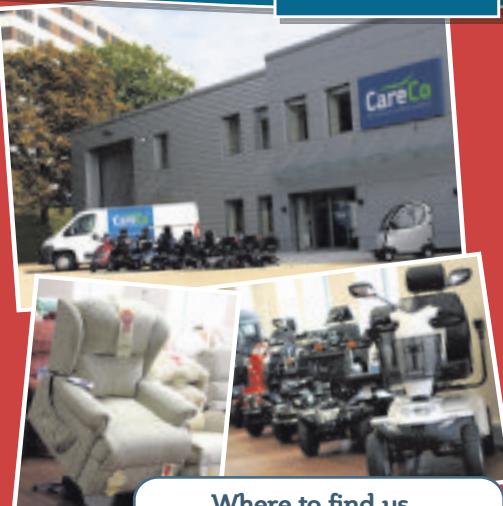
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Second time yobs attack the Queen's jubilee tree

Team's on the ball
for growth with kits



VANDALS have attacked a tree planted to honour the Queen during her Diamond Jubilee for a second time.

First the beech tree was chopped down and the branches dumped in a park bin. Now the a plaque fitted to the remaining stump in Netherton Park has been destroyed.

Geoff Johnson, chairman of the Friends of Netherton Park, said he was 'dismayed' by the latest attack, which took place on New Year's Day — a week after tree had been cut down.

"I fixed the plaque to the stump in defiance but it has been completely destroyed," he said.

"The top has been ripped off. The plaque was attached to the stump with four or five bands of insulation tape so a great deal of effort has gone in to wrecking it.

"It's mindless vandalism. We can see no reason for it. We're not aware of any vendetta against the park.

"From the plaque, it would have been clear that the tree had been planted for the Queen but whoever is responsible just doesn't seem to care," added Mr Johnson.

The inscription on the

plaque said 'planted by the Friends of Netherton Park to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty'.

The first vandalism attack took place on Christmas Day — the day the Queen addressed the nation with a message about the importance of reconciliation.

Mr Johnson believed the attack had been premeditated because the tool was taken along to chop it down.

The Jubilee tree, which cost £250, had been planted in 2012 along with an Olympic tree to commemorate the London Games. Both had been targeted by vandals in the past. The Friends group has not decided whether the tree will be replaced due to concerns about possible repeat attacks.

Glyn Marston, with back, from left, Chelsie Guy, Josh Roberts, Lee Walters, Dale Williams, and Liam Marston

PLAYERS at a dodgeball squad have unveiled their new name and kit as part of the expansion of the club.

The Black Country Knights is the new adult team that has grown out of Walsall Warriors. The Warriors remains the name of the junior arm of the club set up by former marathon runner Glyn Marston.

The Knights are celebrating the arrival of their new blue and black shirts. Mr Marston says: "The design of the new shirt is proving quite popular. People from other teams are buying them and a female player from the United States also ordered one. We're hoping the new shirts will help to raise our profile."

The team plays in the Midlands based Northern Conference Division Two League. "We're always recruiting players, whether they have experience or just beginning everyone is welcome to join us," added Mr Marston.

The Black Country Knights train on Mondays at Willenhall Youth and Community Foundation, in Gomer Street, and on Wednesdays at Portway Lifestyle Centre, in Banbury Road, Oldbury.

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Atomic pair form school of rock



Martin Warlow and Dan Worton, of Ned's Atomic Dustbin, tune up for their rock school in Wolverhampton

BUDDING musicians can now learn how to play instruments in true school of rock fashion. Atomic Sounds Music School has been set up by rock musicians Dan Worton and Martin Warlow, who have both been members of Stourbridge band Ned's Atomic Dustbin.

The school will be giving lessons in guitar, bass, key-

board, drums and vocals. Dan said: "We want to give kids a solid grounding in rock music." Martin added: "We are authentic rock musicians and that will hopefully be exciting for a young kid who wants to pick up guitar."

Atomic Sounds Music School is at Big Deal Music, Salop Street, Wolverhampton. Visit www.atomic-sounds.com

Learner driver in chase

A LEARNER driver led police on an 11-mile high-speed chase after officers tried to stop him, a judge heard.

Jordan Ricketts hurtled through red traffic lights, went round a traffic island the wrong way and mounted the pavement in a bid to get away, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

The 21-year-old, who had three passengers on board as he reached speeds

of 60mph, was finally halted when police used a 'stinger' device to burst the front tyres of his Renault Clio. Mr Matthew Brook, prosecuting, said the 16-minute pursuit started when he raced away from officers who had indicated he should pull over near the Merry Hill Centre on November 12.

Mr Simon Hanns, defending, revealed that Ricketts had owned the £1,000 car for a year without a full licence. Mr Hanns added: "He acted out

of sheer panic." Ricketts of St Georges Road, Dudley, admitted dangerous driving and having no licence and no insurance. He was given an 18-month prison sentence suspended under supervision for two years and ordered to do 150 hours unpaid work. His car has been seized.

Judge Amjad Nawaz said: "This was extremely foolish behaviour. It is down to good fortune that no damage or injury was caused by your driving."

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Crates of beer picked up on the forklift at Holden's brewery in 1967



From humble beginnings, Holden's has come a long way



Denis Briscoe stacking the beer ready for delivery to pubs in 1967



Andy Stokoe cleans kegs at Holden's Brewery



The offices above the bottle shop at Holden's Brewery

Brewery hails 100 years with ale trail

A BREWERY has thrown down the gauntlet to real ale lovers as it launches its centenary celebrations.

Holden's Brewery will challenge punters to get a round in at each of its pubs across the Black Country.

The real ale trail will begin in the spring as the Woodsetton-based brewery kicks-off a range of events to mark its 100th anniversary.

Those who complete the tour of the firm's 20 tenanted pubs will then be able to swap their completed card for Holden's centenary memorabilia. The family-run brewery will also host tours, starting from February.

The arrival of the brewery's centenary year comes as an expansion of the site is nearing completion.

A new tank room will be completed during 2015, increasing capacity at the Sedgley Road West site by 50 per cent, which bosses said had been possible thanks to a boom in the ale trade. One of the

MEMORY LANE

By Richard Guttridge

stops on the Holden's tour will be the Rose and Crown in Brierley Hill and landlord Mark Pritchard believes the idea will drum up interest in the area.

He said: "It's a popular brewery around here. This pub is still a busy little pub and I do think it will make a difference.

"Round here it is a real ale area, it's so popular, especially when they bring out their own monthly ones.

"They tend to go down really well. I think the tour is a really good idea."

Francis Britton, who runs Holdens pub The Wheatsheaf, in Carter's Green, West Bromwich, believes the tour could come as a major boost.

She said: "Anything that gets more people in is a good idea. Hopefully this can help. All pubs need more customers at the mo-

ment and anything that increases the likelihood of people coming in is good."

"Ale is a good seller, the pub is known for having real ale. Locally it does well."

Despite the bleak outlook for the industry in recent years which has seen pubs continue to disappear from Black Country streets, Holden's has been able to buck the trend and invest in the future.

When the expansion is complete, ale production will increase from 50,000 pints a week to 75,000.

Popularity

The extension has been built at the rear of the site in George Street and will see extra fermentation tanks installed. A new bottle store was also completed in 2012.

When the plans were revealed, managing director Jonathan Holden said: "There has been a resurgence in the popularity of ales in recent time and this has been a massive benefit to us.

"This expansion is necessary for us to build on the business."



Jonathan Holden in the new fermentation plant

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The business is still very much family run with Company Director Dave Walters heavily involved with the everyday running of the business with five other members of staff who are family members. Dave's wife, Claire Walters has also joined the company to assist Dave with Health & Safety and HR requirements.

Our company ethos is 'if a job is worth doing, it's worth doing right'. We pride ourselves on our professionalism, workmanship, quality and aftersales and this is why we have gone from strength to strength over the last 8 years of economic uncertainty.

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Moving forward, DW Windows Ltd have completely outgrown our local Sedgley showroom and are now near to completing a deal to secure additional larger premises. This will enable us to continue to expand our installation team, create new office space and enable us to have one of the largest showrooms in the Midlands to showcase all of our fantastic products. Although we will keep our Sedgley showroom, the new premises will allow us to create more jobs, assist the company to continue to expand whilst offering an increased product range and an even better service to our customers.



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COMMERCIAL FEATURE

A VISIT to this new bridal boutique is a must. Following their move from House of Fraser after many years Adele Louise Bridal have opened up their own bridal lounge in School Street, Wolverhampton.

With a focus on customer service and a huge choice of wedding gowns there is something for everyone.

New for 2015 is VIP Thursdays. This is a bespoke service offering the bride the full package.

Massage

You will receive a champagne cocktail on arrival then the bride will be whisked away to receive a facial, arm massage, bridal make-up and bridal hair do. She will then be styled in various bridal gowns and hopefully get you saying yes to the dress.

This service is for a bride and a maximum four guests, with the emphasis on fun. Costs apply.

There are also five seamstresses who work with the boutique to ensure your dress is tailored to fit you perfectly.

They are proud to be elite stockists for the fabulous Justin Alexander gowns as well as stocking the amazing top designer Ian Stuart,



Helping you to look stunning for your big day

Suzanne Neville, Enzoani, Mori Lee, Ronald Joyce and Sonsie dresses.

The boutique is now open seven days a week and can also offer early morning and late evening appointments upon request.

Please note they prefer appointment only so please contact Adele Louise Bridal on 01902 399900 or e-mail info@adelelouisebridal.co.uk to book your appointment. Limited appointments are made

Prom season is also now upon us and the 2015 collection has started to arrive. Names and details of the school are taken to ensure you don't arrive to your prom in the same dress.

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Call for apprenticeships to match with uni places



Leeds West MP Rachel Reeves with Dudley Council leader Peter Lowe (left) and Dudley North MP Ian Austin

SHADOW work and pensions secretary Rachel Reeves came to Dudley to meet a new generation of apprentices at Dudley Council.

Miss Reeves says: "They are working in all sorts of fields, from horticulture to business admin, highways, HGVs, leisure centres and electrical engineering.

"The council is now sending current apprentices to promote the opportunities for prospective ones rather than its HR (human resources) people. It's something we can do around the country."

Labour, which is in charge of Dudley Council and took on the apprentices, says there is much more that could and should be done across Britain.

They want to create at least one apprenticeship for every £1 million spent on public projects and impose new rules to make large companies train a new apprentice for each skilled worker they hire from outside the European Union.

"We've said after 10 years there should be as many apprenticeships as university places, giving different routes for young people to choose from," added Miss Reeves.

"The Government says everything

is going well for people in the Black Country but it's had a pretty difficult four and a half years. This is the first time since the 1970s that people have got worse off. A person in work is £1,600 worse off under David Cameron. That's not a record for him to be proud of. We want an economy where everyone can succeed, not just a few at the top."

"People feel anxious about the future for their families. They are worried about where new jobs will come from," added Miss Reeves.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin said: "Education and skills have to be our number-one priority for our area."

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Holocaust survivor to speak in Dudley

A POLISH woman who survived a Nazi concentration camp will be visiting Dudley to speak at the town's annual Holocaust commemoration event.

In 1943, Hannah Lewis and her family were marched to a labour camp in the village of Adampol in Poland.

Hannah, now aged 77, and her father were the only members of their family to survive the camp.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin has invited her to speak at the town's annual commemoration at the Broadway Campus of Dudley College.

He said: "To have Hannah speaking at the event is a great honour. Hearing her will be a real privilege and something I'm sure the veterans, residents and students in the audience will never forget."

The annual service, organised by Mr Austin and Dudley College Students' Union, has been running for seven years with the support of the Holocaust Educational Trust.

The event on Friday, January 23, from 12.30pm until 1.30pm, will include students from Bishop Milner Catholic School, religious leaders, and the town's mayor.

Steel industry inspires art

PAINTINGS inspired by the last years of the Black Country steel industry are on display at Dudley Museum and Art Gallery.

From Red to Rust, which features work by Cedric Smith, runs in Gallery 3 until March 7.

Gallery 9 at the museum in St James's Road, will be used for Dudley Camera Club's annual exhibition from Saturday, January 17 to February 21.

The club's presentation evening will be taking place there on February 2 at 7.30pm.

The town's museum and art gallery is open 10am to 4pm Monday to Saturday.

Lupus drop-in

WEST Midlands Lupus Group have organised a drop-in clinic at Russells Hall Hospital today (Thursday) between 2pm and 4pm. The clinic is at the hospital's Clinical Education Centre lecture theatre. For more information call Yvonne Norton 01902 498236.

Uni technical college events

Team GB star is inspiration

PUPILS and parents will get the chance to find out more about studying at University Technical Colleges (UTC) in the Black Country at a series of events.

Open days will take place for the Black Country UTC in Walsall, Health Futures UTC in West Bromwich and West Midlands Construction UTC in Wolverhampton.

UTCs are aimed at 14 to 18-year-olds and provide a focus on problem solving and working directly with businesses on projects. The curriculum is delivered in partnership with a local university and dedicated at least 40 per cent of time to its chosen technical specialism. They combine traditional GCSE and A-Level curriculum with specialist technical qualifications in areas where a skills gap has been identified.

On Saturday Health Futures UTC will be at Central Sixth in West Bromwich between 10am and 2pm as part of the Connexions Fair. The University of Wolverhampton's Walsall Campus is hosting an event on January 24 between 10.30am and 3.30pm.

Crane by name and restored them too



Black Country-based steam enthusiast Len Crane, who restored engines and cranes, has died at the age of 81

STEAM engine enthusiast Len Crane has died at the age of 81. Mr Crane restored seven steam engines at a time when many were being dismantled across the Black Country.

He also organised popular events, including the Steam Gathering at the Black Country Living Museum.

On Sunday, following a long illness, Mr Crane passed away at New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton with his wife Jane and daughter Brigitte by his side.

Mrs Crane, aged 74, said: "He was so passionate about anything which moved and so talented to learn about it all himself. The work he carried out restoring the old engines was remarkable, and he made many, many friends along the way."

Mr Crane was born in Yorkshire and his family moved to West Bromwich when he was young with his father working at Delta Metals. He attended George Salter school in West Bromwich before a scholarship to Ryland Memorial School of Art.

He had a successful 12-year career in motorbike racing which saw him crowned British Motorcross Scramble Champion in 1966 and 1967. He worked as a tool maker at Great Bridge Foundry and later in Birmingham.

Uni technical college events

STUDENTS have been inspired during a talk by a sports stars who took a leading role in the Invictus games.

Adam Nixon, who is a member of the Team GB Wheelchair Basketball squad, came to speak to students at Halesowen College.

The college hosted an 'inspire' week for students to get them interested in sports and careers in the industry.

Adam, aged 31, from Hereford, was the wheelchair basketball captain at the Invictus Games and a Pride of Britain Winner this year.

He served in the Royal Artillery for nine years before suffering serious injuries whilst on his second tour of duty in Iraq.

After undergoing extensive rehabilitation at Headley Court, Adam's family suggested he join the Worcester Wolves' wheelchair basketball team.

There were also guest speakers from the University of Worcester and Newman University talking about sports related degrees.

Hundreds of extra officers are to combat sex crimes

POLICE have bolstered the number of officers tackling sex crimes across the West Midlands as it emerged the region is a hot spot for sexual predators.

Wolverhampton has the second highest rate of convicted sex offenders per person in the entire country with 377 convicted criminals living in the city.

Figures show there are also high numbers of sex offenders elsewhere in the Black Country, with 348 in Sandwell, 315 in Walsall and 293 in Dudley.

There are more than 1,000 sex offenders living in Birmingham and 893 in Staffordshire.

West Midlands Police Chief Constable Chris Sims has now added 275 officers to its Public Protection Unit — the department that deals with sex

By Rob Golledge

offences — with a total 793 police officers with 50 civilian staff.

Chief Inspector Michaela Kerr, said: "West Midlands Police recently expanded its Public Protection Unit with 275 additional officers joining the team.

"The number of officers working in Public Protection now accounts for around 10 per cent of the force's total strength, that's a clear indication of our commitment to supporting victims of sex crime, safeguarding vulnerable people, and ensuring offenders face justice.

"We have a dedicated team of specialist officers that work with probation and partner agencies to manage sex offenders."

Across England and Wales, police and probation are currently monitoring

46,102 registered sex offenders. Latest figures show there are 2,521 sex offenders in the West Midlands.

For every 100,000 people in Wolverhampton, there are 172 sex offenders — an average which is narrowly lower than the highest rate in the country, which is in Hull where the number is 174 per 100,000.

Protecting

Wolverhampton South East MP Pat McFadden said: "I am sure this information will concern the public and the question I have to ask is why does Wolverhampton have one of the highest rates?"

"What is absolutely paramount is that the police and relevant authorities know who these offenders are and where they live and that they are actively protecting the public."

In contrast, neighbouring South Staffordshire had the lowest number of sex offenders, 41 per 100,000.

New gym creating 40 jobs

BUDGET gym operator Xercise4less is to open its second site in the Black Country on Friday, January 30.

Wolves legend Steve Bull opened its gym in Cradock Street, Wolverhampton in November and it is now opening its 35,000sq ft site in High Street, Brierley Hill, creating 40 jobs.

Both are equipped with more than 400 pieces of state-of-the-art equipment.

The Brierley Hill site is one of seven new sites acquired by the Leeds-based business through WSB Property Consultants.

Xercise4less plans to open 10 sites over the next three months with a target of reaching 100 gyms by the end of 2016.

It was launched in Castleford in 2006 by former rugby player Jon Wright and now has more than 200,000 members.

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Gatherings in public places, such as supermarket car parks, have been a bone of contention



The campaign forbids organised car cruising

Court action

1) It is forbidden for anyone to participate in "car cruising" (as defined in the schedule below) anywhere within the Claimants' combined geographical area known locally as the Black Country Area.

2) It is also forbidden for anyone to promote, organise, or publicise via e-mail, the internet or any publication or broadcast, any "car cruising" within the defined geographical area.

3) A power of arrest pursuant to section 27 Police and Criminal Justice Act 2006 shall apply to clause 1 above.

4) The order and power of arrest shall continue for 3 years following the commencement of this order or until it is varied or discharged by the court. This order shall come into effect at midnight on 2 February 2015 provided that the Claimants have completed certain steps. It shall, subject to further order, expire at midnight 1 February 2018.

5) Personal service of this injunction is dispensed with pursuant to rule 81.8 of the Civil Procedure Rules.

Schedule

1) "Car Cruising" means two or more motor vehicles (including motorbikes) between the hours of 3pm and 7am being on a highway or in a publicly accessible place within the Black Country Area at which any such vehicle or occupant of a vehicle performs any of the prohibited activities listed in clause 3 below which causes, or is capable of causing, any of the prohibited consequences set out in clause 4 below.

2) "Participating in car cruising" means being the driver of, or being carried in (or on), a motor vehicle (including motorbikes) in circumstances in which paragraph 1 above applies.

3) The prohibited activities referred to in clause 1 above are: speeding; driving in convoy; racing; performing stunts; sounding horns/playing music as to cause a significant public nuisance; using foul or abusive language; using threatening, intimidating behaviour towards another person; and causing obstruction on a public highway, whether moving or stationary.

4) The prohibited consequences referred to in clause 1 above are: excessive noise; danger or risk of injury to road users (including pedestrians); damage or significant risk of damage to property; significant risk of harm; significant public nuisance; and significant annoyance to the public.

The full injunction and map showing the geographical area is available at <http://bit.ly/carcruisingban> and council offices.

Injunction putting the brake on car cruising

CAR cruising will be banned across the Black Country after a ground-breaking High Court injunction was secured by Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall councils.

The injunction forbids people from participating in or promoting, organising or publicising a "car cruise" anywhere within the Black Country.

Car cruising – the act of drivers meeting on the public highway on either an organised or impromptu basis to race or show off in their cars – is noisy, dangerous and illegal.

Regular gatherings take place at a number of "hotspots" around the Black Country, where up to 250 vehicles and spectators turn local roads into a race track.

They include the Black Country Route and Birmingham New Road in Wolverhampton, Flood Street in Dudley, Bean Road Industrial Estate, Tipton, Hallens Drive, Wednesbury and Brickyard Road, Walsall, as well as public and retail car parks across the Black Country.

Local councils and the police have received hundreds of complaints about car cruising over the last few years,

ranging from vehicles and spectators obstructing highways or residential or business properties, to dangerous driving, excessive noise, littering, verbal abuse and intimidation. There have also been a number of collisions involving vehicles taking part in car cruises.

Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall councils, working in partnership with West Midlands Police, secured the injunction from the High Court in Birmingham last month. Anyone suspected of breaching it will be at risk of being in contempt of court, for which an adult can face up to two years in prison and a fine.

Anti-social

Speaking on behalf of the partners, Councillor Elias Mattu, Wolverhampton City Council's cabinet member for leisure and communities, said: "Car cruising has been a bone of contention for residents and businesses for many years.

"The activities are not only wholly anti-social, but also illegal and dangerous, putting the safety of participants and spectators at risk. It's only a matter of time until someone is seriously injured or even killed.

"I am confident this ground-breaking injunction will have a positive impact on the lives of law-abiding people in Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall."

Chief Inspector Kerry Blakeman, head of West Midlands Police's Traffic unit, said: "This Black Country-wide injunction will form the backbone of our on-going measures to target people using the road as a racetrack while ensuring the safety of others.

"As well as the obvious dangers of driving at speed on urban roads, car cruising generates a lot of late-night noise nuisance for people living near key routes.

Law abiding drivers can also feel intimidated when they inadvertently find themselves in the middle of a gathering."

Councillor Mattu added: "It should be stressed that we are not seeking to prevent legitimate car enthusiasts from enjoying their hobby.

"What we want to do is put a stop to the menace of car cruising, which is making life a misery for so many people across the Black Country."

● Anyone who witnesses a car cruise on the public highway or public place is asked to call police on 101.

**CAR CRUISING
BANNED
IN THE BLACK COUNTRY**



'Big Lizzy' project is to document steel history

THEY used to call her 'Big Lizzy' – an enormous blast furnace that dominated the skyline of the Black Country for decades.

And now, the story of the old 'Elisabeth' furnace in Bilston will be explored in a local history project.

In The Shadow of Elisabeth, which aims to train more than volunteers with the skills to document the memories of the steel men and women who fought against the British Steel Corporations rationalisation plan in the late 1970s, will launch at Bilston Community Centre later this month.

A £42,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to Bilston Community Association is financing the project, supporting a group of participants as they examine this overlooked chapter in local and national labour relations.

Booklet

Those chosen to take part will be trained in the use of public archives and oral history interviewing in order to collect the testimonies of up to 40 former steel workers. This information will then be incorporated into a museum exhibition, an educational booklet and a documentary to be showcased at community events scheduled throughout 2015 and 2016.

Councillor Bert Turner, a former member of the Works Joint Action Committee at Bilston Works, said: 'The bravery and resilience shown by the steel men of Bilston in battling against the British Steel Corporation and the Government should be remembered and celebrated.'

'It is hoped that 'In the Shadow of Elisabeth' will encourage a new generation of young Bilstonians to be inspired by the action of Bilston's steel men all those years ago.'



Bilston Steel workers striking for better wages in January 1980



Over 2,000 men and women take part in a march through Lichfield Street

The title draws inspiration from a giant 'Elisabeth' blast furnace, torn down in October 1980.

Pat McFadden, MP for Wolverhampton South East, said: 'The closure of the steelworks was a defining moment in the town's history. It changed the town's economic history and character.'

The project will officially be

launched at a community event in Bilston Community Centre, at 6pm on January 23 featuring speeches by former steel workers and trade union officials, poetry readings, live music and the premiering of a short audio documentary on life in the Works.

Anyone interested in attending should email Greig Campbell at greig@itsoe.co.uk or call 07585669833.

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A tour of the Moselle Valley, really is a superb experience, from the picturesque villages and half-ruined castles to the gentle slopes covered in vines. The people are open and friendly and welcome visitors to their valley which offers some of the most interesting sights and beautiful scenery in Europe.

See the medieval 'olde worlde' charm of Aachen, the most western city in Germany and situated amongst beautiful hills and where the remains of buildings from the Roman times can still be seen.

Koblenz, its name derives from the Latin for confluence, sits strategically where the Moselle and Rhine rivers meet. The city is home to attractive squares, amusing sculptures and plenty of pavement cafes.

The medieval town of Cochem is one of the largest cities in the area and for many years has been one of the commercial centres of the Moselle wine trade. Here, there is the opportunity to take a boat trip from Cochem to Beilstein on one of the famous cruisers.

Explore charming Trier, the oldest city in Germany. During the visit see the Roman amphitheatre, which is one of the most perfectly preserved in the world; the Baths, Basilica and the striking Porta Negra - or Black gate - the largest and best preserved building of its kind in the world.

Bernkastel, probably the valley's most scenic towns, is famous for its wine and in fact possesses the largest single vineyard in Germany.

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- Visit to Fortnum & Mason and Harrods
- Glass of Champagne at the Champagne bar St Pancras
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- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

The Mary Rose

Two days departing March 21

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- Return coach travel
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- Entrance to the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard to see the Mary Rose Museum
- Visit to Winchester
- Harbour tour by boat
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Cunard 175th Anniversary - Liverpool

Two days departing May 24

PRICE FROM £109

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Visit to Liverpool to see the three Cunard Queens on the Mersey
- Visit to Chester
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

The Dawlish Railway and the Avocet Line

Four days departing March 27

PRICE FROM £229

- Return coach travel
- Three nights half-board accommodation
- Railway journey on the Riviera Line from Exeter to Paignton
- Railway journey on the Avocet Line from Topsham to Exmouth
- Cruise on the River Exe with cream tea
- Free time in Exmouth and Torquay
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Call the Midwife

Two days departing May 16, Jul 25, Oct 3

PRICE FROM £125

- Return coach travel
- Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation in the Kent area
- Visit to historic Canterbury on day one
- Visit with entrance to London's Historic Dockyard in Chatham, including a 90-minute Call the Midwife tour on day two
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V787X)

Strawberry Fields, Penny Lane and the Cavern Club

Three days departing May 29 and Sep 19

PRICE FROM £179

- Return coach travel
- Two nights half-board accommodation at a hotel in the North West Area, within 20 miles of Liverpool
- 'Beatles Coach Tour' and entrance to the Cavern Club
- Journey on the Ferry 'cross the Mersey'
- Afternoon in Liverpool
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V787X)

Wimbledon Championships 2015

Two days departing July 11 and 12

PRICE FROM £155

- Return coach travel
- Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation at a hotel in the Greater London area
- Reserved seat on No.1 Court at Wimbledon for the full day's play on day one
- Visit to Windsor
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V787X)

Lakes and Mountains of Austria

Eight days various departure dates

PRICE FROM £969

- Return flights
- Seven nights half-board accommodation including Kaprun in the heart of the Alps
- Tour of the Austrian Lake District
- Guided tour of Salzburg
- Visit to the Krimml waterfalls
- Tour to the foot of Grossglockner mountain
- Visit to St Wolfgang
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

The Amalfi Coast

Eight days various departure dates

PRICE FROM £739

- Return flights
- Seven nights half-board accommodation
- Visit to Sorrento and a drive along the Amalfi Coast
- Visit to Paestum and Salerno
- Drinks with dinner, free tea and biscuits daily
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V7812, ATOL 3235)

Classical Spain

Seven days various departure dates

PRICE FROM £539

- Return flights
- Six nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- Guided tour of Seville
- Guided tour of the Alhambra
- Visit to Cordoba
- Visit to medieval Ronda
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

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Blues and classic rock at Robin 2

CLASSIC rock and blues are on the agenda at Bilston's Robin 2 venue.

Twin guitar rock supergroup Snakecharmer are in concert tomorrow (Friday) at the Mount Pleasant venue. The band features original Whitesnake guitarist Micky Moody and bassist Neil Murray alongside guitar ace Laurie Wisefield from Wishbone Ash. Expect such classics as Here I Go Again.

Luna Rossa, the new project by Anne-Marie Helder and Jonathan Edwards of Welsh prog rock band Panic Room, bring their rearranged acoustic show to the Robin 2 on Sunday.

The Aynsley Lister Band, led by the Leicestershire-born blues guitarist, are in concert on Thursday, January 22.

Family comedy and tale of terror

THE revival of cult comedy East Is East is staged at the Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre until Saturday.

Fresh from a run in London's West End, it features Absolutely Fabulous star Jane Horrocks as the mother in an Anglo Pakistani family in '70s Salford, alongside the playwright Ayub Khan Din, as his own creation Pakistani chip shop owner George Khan.

The Frozen Scream, with Rula Lenska, is at The Patrick Centre, Birmingham Hippodrome, until Saturday. Christopher Green and novelist Sarah Walters' play is based on a tale of terror from the 1920s.

Grand gets ready for musical about 'Greatest Show on Earth'

Romance at movies for Sophie



Sophie Evans joins singing siblings Richard and Adam

WEST End star Sophie Evans has been announced as the special guest for Britain's Got Talent finalists Richard and Adam's At The Musicals concert on Valentine's Day at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

The Welsh singer and actress came to prominence in 2010 when she was named runner-up in the hugely popular BBC series Over The Rainbow. She was later chosen by Lord Andrew Lloyd-Webber to play the alternate Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz at the London Palladium, a role she eventually took over full time from Danielle Hope.

Sensational Welsh singing brothers Richard and Adam are back with their second UK Tour, this time featuring such silver screen classics as Can You Feel the Love Tonight, Goldfinger and Moon River. Tickets for the 7.30pm concert cost from £21 to £27.

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ROLL up roll up for the greatest show in the Midlands when circus musical Barnum makes its Grand arrival in Wolverhampton at the end of this month.

Song, dance and funnyman Brian Conley will be showing his circus skills when this hit revival of the musical about America's 'Greatest Showman' Phineas T Barnum opens a five-day run on Tuesday, January 27.

Barnum was a hit when it opened on Broadway in 1980 starring Glenn Close and Jim Dale. It won three Tony Awards and a Drama Desk Award. When it opened at the London Palladium a year later Michael Crawford gave an award-winning performance.

This production of Barnum opened at Chichester Festival Theatre's Theatre in the Park in July last year and became one of the most successful musicals in the 51 year history of that theatre with a record box office attendance of almost 70,000 people.

The musical follows the irrepressible imagination and dreams of Phineas T Barnum. The story of his life and his marriage to Chairy — here played by Linzi Hateley — reveals a couple who looked at the world from opposite sides of the spectrum. It also reveals that she was the practical one who made Barnum's dreams come true.

The production follows the legendary showman as he teams up with J A Bailey to create Barnum and Bailey's Circus, the Greatest Show on Earth. Cy Coleman's exuberant score includes the songs Come Follow The Band, The Colours Of My Life and There Is A Sucker Born Ev'ry Minute.

Brian Conley is one of the UK's most versatile performers and in recent years scored a huge success as Fagin in the national tour of Cameron Mackintosh's production of Oliver!, as Edna Turnblad in Hairspray — including a hit run at the Grand — and as Caractacus Potts in Chitty Chitty Bang Bang at the London Palladium. On television he is probably best known for playing Doug Digby in The Grimleys, his prime time vehicle The Brian Conley Show and numerous Royal Variety Performances.



Linzi Hateley and Brian Conley in Barnum
Linzi Hateley is an award winning actress who has starred on Broadway, in the West End, with the RSC and at the National Theatre. She created the role of Mrs Banks in Disney and Cameron Mackintosh's stage production of Mary Poppins. Her many other West End credits include Donna in Mamma Mia!, Roxie in Chicago, Rizzo in Grease and Eponine in Les Misérables. She recently appeared in the National Theatre's hit London Road.

Those that can't make it to Wolverhampton, or who want to experience Barnum all over again, can catch this touring production in the West Midlands again when it plays Birmingham Hippodrome in July.

Stamp of success for Swedish sisters

ON Wednesday, January 21, the Red Lion Folk Club in King's Heath, Birmingham, will welcome Megson, who had a successful 2014 with the release of their critically-acclaimed album In A Box. The duo of Stu and Debbie Hanna will be supported by Marie-Claire Berreen. Tickets are £11 plus an extra £1 for non-members.

Swedish sisters First Aid Kit have sold out their concert at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham tomorrow (Friday). The duo of Johanna and Klara Söderberg, from Stockholm, will be bringing their mix of folk and country to the impressive venue at 7.30pm. They have been such an international success that they are being featured on a Swedish postage stamp.

World premiere at ballet evening

BIRMINGHAM Royal Ballet and its acclaimed orchestra, the Royal Ballet Sinfonia, under the baton of Koen Kessels, returns to Symphony Hall, Birmingham, for An Evening of Music and Dance on Saturday, January 31.

Compered by the company's director David Bintley, the evening includes classical favourites and danced highlights from the company's diverse repertoire.

The programme is due to include scenes from Coppelia, Cinderella and Swan Lake. It will also feature the world premiere of Matryoshka choreographed by BRB dancer Ruth Brill to music by Shostakovich.

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CHOICE



Warwick Davis

Planet's Got Talent (ITV, 6.30pm)

When Paul O'Grady hosted the pilot for what would become Britain's Got Talent, UK TV bosses weren't impressed, so Simon Cowell hotfooted it to the US and sold the Opportunity Knocks-style format with far more ease. Alas, Paul fell out with ITV, so Ant and Dec took over, and before long, Britain's Got Talent became one of Blighty's best loved shows. Then the rest of the world seemed to follow suit with their own versions of the glitzy talent show. Now, narrator Warwick Davis and a team have compiled a best of show. The first of the series features a dog that can do backflips on America's Got Talent; amazing Russian acrobats; an apple-hating Korean woman, and (Warwick's favourite), a man in India who can stuff 200 straws into his mouth at once.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00 Saturday Kitchen** Live. 11.30 James Martin: Home Comforts. (R) **12.00 BBC News;** Weather. **12.10 Football Focus.** **12.50 Saturday Sportsday.** **1.00 Live Snooker:** The Masters. Hazel Irvine presents coverage of the opening semi-final from Alexandra Palace. **4.30 Final Score.** **5.20 Pointless Celebrities.** (R)

6.10 BBC News; Weather.

6.30 Now You See It. Mel Giedroyc narrates the best and worst of the magic world, featuring Dynamo and a man with an invisible driver, and a man taking his legs for a walk, plus tricks going wrong.

7.00 The Voice UK. Emma Willis and Myleene Klass present the second round of the competition to find the nation's best new vocal talent. Coaches Tom Jones, Will.i.am, Ricky Wilson and Rita Ora sit with their backs to the auditions, hitting their buttons to spin their chair if they want to mentor that singer – and allowing the hopeful to choose whose team they want to join if more than one coach turns. Their aim is to build a team of 12 acts each and they'll use every trick in the book to attract the ones they want. Hopefuls include Yorkshire lass Jade Hewitt, 19-year-old identical twins Classical Reflection from Peterborough, and Billy and Martine, a hippy couple from Devon.

8.25 The National Lottery: Win Your Wish List. Hazel Irvine hosts the game show in which two contestants answer questions to try to win each other's dream prizes. Including the lottery draws, with Gaby Roslin.

9.15 Casualty. Rob Pidgeon tries to help a family who cannot feed their children. Ethan treats a hallucinating patient and Connie prepares for a showdown in court with Hailey Blake.

10.05 BBC News; Weather.

10.25 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents coverage of the latest Premier League clashes, including Swansea v Chelsea and Queens Park Rangers v Manchester United: National Lottery Update.

11.50 The Football League Show.

1.10 Film: *Phantoms.* (1998) **2.40 Weather for the Week Ahead.** **2.45 BBC News.**

BBC2

6.10 Animal Park. (R) **6.40 Film:** *Skyrunners.* (2009) A teenager gains superpowers after finding a UFO but is kidnapped by aliens, leaving his brother to come to the rescue. Sci-fi adventure starring Joey Pollard and Kelly Blatz. **8.10 Film:** *1977.* (1977) The Tudor monarch looks back on his reign as he lies on his deathbed, and recalls the six women he made his queen. Historical drama, starring Keith Michell and Donald Pleasance. **10.10** Fred Dibnah's Building of Britain. (R) **11.10 British Isles: A Natural History.** (R) **12.00 James Martin: Home Comforts.** (R) **12.45 Sean Connery: Talking Pictures.** (1975) The Wind and the Lion. (1975) An American woman and her son are kidnapped by a Moroccan chieftain in the 1900s, but come to sympathise with his cause. Period adventure, starring Sean Connery and Candice Bergen. Edited for daytime broadcast. **3.30 Escape to the Country.** (R) **4.30 Live Snooker:** The Masters. The concluding frames of the opening semi-final from Alexandra Palace. **5.30 Flug It!**

6.30 Dad's Army. A land mine cuts off all power and communications so the men are marooned-on-Sea, but Captain Mainwaring tries to maintain order by declaring martial law – while Pike gets stuck on some iron railings. Vintage comedy first broadcast in 1974, starring Arthur Lowe and Ian Lavender. (R)

7.00 Live Snooker: The Masters. Hazel Irvine presents coverage of the second semi-final from Alexandra Palace, London, where the line-up for the final will be confirmed over the best of 11 frames. Ronnie O'Sullivan prevailed against Stephen Maguire with a 6-2 victory in last year's concluding semi-final, earning him a chance to claim the title in a contest against Mark Selby. With commentary by Dennis Taylor, Ken Doherty, Stephen Hendry, John Virgo, Steve Davis and John Parrott.

10.30 Film: *All Good Things.* (2010) Premiere. The heir of a wealthy family marries a medical student, but becomes a suspect when she disappears without trace. Crime drama, starring Ryan Gosling and Kristen Dunst.

12.05 Snooker Extr. Hazel Irvine presents extensive highlights of the opening semi-final of the Masters at Alexandra Palace in London. **2.05** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10 Bottom Knocker Street.** (R) **6.20 Bottom Knocker Street.** (R) **6.45 Dino Dan.** (R) **7.00 Cannibals.** (R) **7.10 Sooty.** (R) **7.25 Signed Stories:** Share a Story. (R) **7.30 Scrambled:** Scrambled. **7.35 Scrambled:** Neds & Nobodies. (R) **7.45 Scrambled:** Adventure of the Year. (R) **8.00 Scrambled:** Horrid Harry. (R) **8.50 Scrambled:** Hulk and the Agents of Smash. **9.25 ITV News:** 9.30 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **10.25 Murder.** She Wrote. (R) **11.20 ITV News:** Weather. **11.30 Ejector Seat.** (R) **12.30 Britain's Best Back Gardens.** (R) **1.30 Who's Doing His Dishes?** (R) **2.35 Film:** *The Secret of My Success.* (1987) Comedy, starring Michael J. Fox. **4.35 Off Their Rockers.** (R) **5.05 Regional Programme:** Weather. **5.15 ITV News:** Weather. **5.30 You've Been Framed!** Best of the Best. (R)

6.30 Planet's Got Talent. New series. The best and worst clips from the global Got Talent franchise, examining how contestants across the world have fared in front of the judges. Narrated by Warwick Davis.

7.00 Harry Hill's Stars in Their Eyes. A phone retail manager, a holiday singer, a nurse, a learning administrator and a delivery driver are transformed into their favourite singers as they vie for a place in the final.

8.05 Take Me Out. Graphic designer Matt, Team GB taekwondo champion Andrew, car salesman Jamie and window cleaner Ross vie for the attentions of 30 single women.

9.20 Film: *Bridget Jones's Diary.* (2001) A single woman begins a new year with resolutions to find love, quit her bad habits and take a step up the career ladder. Her plans don't always fit as she tries to deal with her mother's infidelity, get over her passion for filing, her boss and come to terms with her feelings for an uptight lawyer. Romantic comedy based on Helen Fielding's novel, starring Renée Zellweger and Colin Firth.

11.10 ITV News; Weather.

11.30 Film: *Witness.* (1989) The ghost of a pilot is unable to rest until he helps his girlfriend learn to move on with her life. Steven Spielberg's romantic fantasy, starring Richard Dreyfuss and Holly Hunter.

1.35 Jackpot247. **3.00 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA.** (R) **3.40 ITV Nightscreen.**

CHANNEL 4

6.10 How I Met Your Mother. (R) **6.35 How I Met Your Mother.** (R) **7.00 Snowmania Marathon 2014.** **7.55 The Morning Line.** **9.00 The King of Queens.** (R) **9.30 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **10.00 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **10.30 Frasier.** (R) **11.00 Frasier.** (R) **11.30 The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **12.55 The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **2.25 Special with Gaby Martin.** (R) **1.30 Channel 4 Racing.** Live coverage of Ascot and Haydock Park. **4.00 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **5.00 The Simpsons.** (R) **5.30 The Simpsons.** (R)

6.00 Channel 4 News.

6.30 The Restoration Man. George Clarke makes his way to Essex to observe the work of Jim and Bee Goody as they transform a derelict Victorian school into their dream property. (R)

7.00 The World's Best Diet. Food Unwrapped presenter Dehong Li and Kali Quilton travel the globe examining the eating habits of a variety of countries, tribes and communities, revealing how dietary tendencies have changed radically since the 1960s. Experts help them rank 50 of the world's diets, from worst to best, as they explore the differences and surprising similarities between what people, thousands of miles apart, consume. Will their discoveries offer an insight into how individuals can improve their health and quality of life? (R)

9.00 Film: *The Sweeney.* (2012) Premiere. An insubordinate detective and his loyal partner set out to stop a series of robberies across London. While they try to bring the criminals to justice, they come under investigation themselves as their unorthodox methods are met with disapproval from their superiors. Crime thriller based on the 1970s TV series, with Ray Winstone, Ben Drew, Damian Lewis and Hayley Atwell.

11.15 Greg Davies: The Back of My Mum's Head. Stand-up comedy with the Man Down star, from the Lowry in Salford. Greg embarks on a petty quest to find out whether anyone is normal, after his mother remarked that he is not.

12.15 Film: *The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad!* (1988) **1.50** 50 Years of Rock Express – Amps, Whirlwind and Rebel Riffs. (R) **2.50 Hollywoods.** (R) **5.00 SuperScrimpers.** (R) **5.50 NFL: Rush Zone.**

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.** (R) **10.35 Access.** **10.40 Monkey Life.** **11.00 Ice Road Truckers.** (R) **11.10 Ice Road Truckers.** (R) **2.05 Ice Road Truckers.** (R) **3.00 Film:** *Columbo: Try and Catch Me.* (1977) Crime drama, starring Peter Falk. **4.35 Film:** *Columbo: Death Hits the Jackpot.* (1991) Detective drama, with Peter Falk and Rip Torn.

6.25 The NCIS Movie: War on Terror. Feature-length episode. A military aircraft transporting the bodies of US Marines back home crashes before reaching their destination, and Gibbs and the team are called in to help identify human remains at the site of the wreckage. However, a DNA discrepancy turns a routine investigation into a search for a missing person. Crime drama, starring Mark Harmon. (R)

8.00 CSI: Last Days of Jim Brass. A 25-year-old mystery involving the theft of cash and the death of one of the robbers from gunshot wounds is rekindled when officers discover the bullet-riddled body of one of the witnesses in a location remarkably close to where the original incident occurred. As neither the money nor a lion figurine that was also taken that day were recovered, locals become convinced of a connection, and a former detective – obsessed by the case – also makes his presence felt. Elsewhere, Captain Brass handles a personal crisis after his daughter takes an overdose. Treat Williams guest stars, with Ted Danson, Elisabeth Shue and Paul Gailfoyle. Last in the series. (R)

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Celebrity Big Brother. Highlights of the famous residents past 24 hours under the all-seeing eye of Big Brother, as they try to get used to their housemates' quirks and foibles while also coping with the day-to-day complications of life inside the house.

10.00 Film: *Bad Boys.* (1995) Two detectives are forced to swap identities as they hunt for a heroin connoisseur stolen by a drug kingpin. Michael Bay's action thriller, starring Will Smith and Martin Lawrence. (R)

12.15 SuperGervais Show. **3.10 Celebrity Big Brother.** (R) **4.00 House Doctor.** (R) **4.25 Make It Big.** (R) **5.15 Angels of Jarm.** (R) **5.40 Roar the Racing Car.** (R)

7.00 Lost Land of the Volcano. **8.00 Everyday Miracles: The Genius of Sofas, Stockings and Scanners.** **9.00 Spiral.** **10.50 Blondie's New York and the Making of Parallel Lines.** **11.40 Blondie at Glastonbury.** **12.35 Synth Britannia.** **2.05 Lost Land of the Volcano.** **3.05 Blondie's New York and the Making of Parallel Lines.** **3.55 Close.**

ITV2

11.00 The Cube: Celebrity Special. **12.05 You've Been Framed!** **1.05 Totally You've Been Framed!** **2.20 Film:** *Valiant.* (2005) **3.50 Film:** *Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium.* (2007) **4.20 Take Me Out – The Gossip.** **10.55 Blue Go Mad in Ibiza.** **11.05 Film:** *Harold & Kumar Get the Munchies.* (2004) **12.55 Moon.** **1.45 Days 2.12** **Fake Reaction 2.45 Teleshopping.** **3.00 Teleshopping 3.30 The Store.**

ITV3

11.45 Inspector Morse. **1.15 A Touch of Frost.** **3.15 Agatha Christie's Rosemary and Thyme.** **7.00 Doc Martin.** **8.00 Midsummer Murders.** **10.00 Lewis.** **12.05 A Touch of Frost.** **2.00 ITV3 Nightscreen.**

ITV4

11.45 Pawn Stars. **1.35 Storage Wars.** **2.30 Storage Wars: Texas.** **3.30 Film:** *Destry.* (1954) **5.25 Film:** *Red River.* (1948) **8.10 Film:** *Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey. (1991) **9.00 Africa Cup of Nations Highlights.** **11.00 Film:** *Apocalypse Now.* (1979) **1.55 The Motorbike Show.** **2.45 ITV4 Nightscreen.** **3.00 Teleshopping 3.30 The Store.***

Film4

11.30 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD. **12.30 Melissa & Joey.** **1.30 How I Met Your Mother.** **2.30 Rude(ish).** **3.00 The Big Bang Theory.** **8.00 The 100.** **9.00 Film:** *Knight and Day.* (2010) **11.10 The Big Bang Theory 12.11.** **1.10 The Inbetweeners.** **1.10 How I Met Your Mother.** **2.10 The Big Gervais Show.** **3.40 Don't Trust the B**** in Apartment 23.** **2.25 One Tree Hill 4.10 Desperate Housewives.**

Film5

11.00 13 Rue Madeleine. (1946) **1.00 Biggles.** (1986) **2.50 East Girls.** (2012) **4.30 Iron Sharpens Iron.** (2007) **6.50 The Gun.** (1989) **9.00 Prison.** (2010) **10.45 Storage.** (2012) **12.30 Dog Pound.** (2010) **2.15 Basket Case.** **4.00 Close.**

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Great Movie Mistakes IV: May the Fourth Be with You. **8.00 Top Gear.** **9.00 Film:** *Armageddon.* (1998) **11.25 Family Guy.** **2.00 Crimz.** **3.00 The Revolution Will Be Televised.** **4.00 Close.**

BBC Four

7.00 Lost Land of the Volcano. **8.00 Everyday Miracles: The Genius of Sofas, Stockings and Scanners.** **9.00 Spiral.** **10.50 Blondie's New York and the Making of Parallel Lines.** **11.40 Blondie at Glastonbury.** **12.35 Synth Britannia.** **2.05 Lost Land of the Volcano.** **3.05 Blondie's New York and the Making of Parallel Lines.** **3.55 Close.**

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ITV5

11.30 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD. **12.30 Melissa & Joey.** **1.30 How I Met Your Mother.** **2.30 Rude(ish).** **3.00 The Big Bang Theory.** **8.00 The 100.** **9.00 Film:** *Knight and Day.* (2010) **11.10 The Big Bang Theory 12.11.** **1.10 The Inbetweeners.** **1.10 How I Met Your Mother.** **2.10 The Big Gervais Show.** **3.40 Don't Trust the B**** in Apartment 23.** **2.25 One Tree Hill 4.10 Desperate Housewives.**

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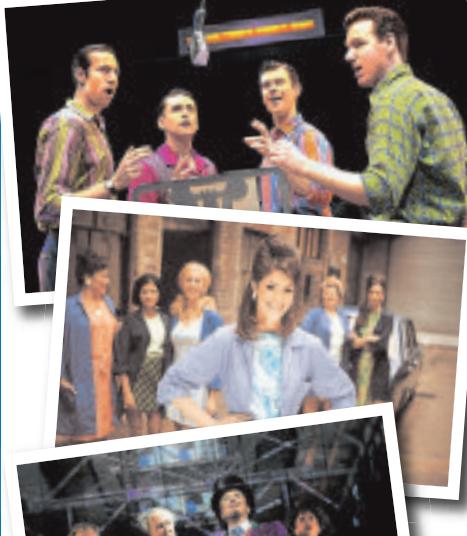
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11.45 Pawn Stars. **1.35 Storage Wars.** **2.30 Storage Wars: Texas.** **3.30 Film:** *Destry.* (1954) **5.25 Film:** *Red River.* (1948) **8.10 Film:** *Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey. (1991) **9.00 Africa Cup of Nations Highlights.** **11.00 Film:** *Apocalypse Now.* (1979) **1.55 The Motorbike Show.** **2.45 ITV4 Nightscreen.** **3.00 Teleshopping 3.30 The Store.***

ITV5

11.30 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD. **12.30 Melissa & Joey.** **1.30 How I Met Your Mother.** **2.30 Rude(ish).** **3.00 The Big Bang Theory.** **8.00 The 100.** **9.00 Film:** *Knight and Day.* (2010) **11.10 The Big Bang Theory 12.11.** **1.10 The Inbetweeners.** **1.10 How I Met Your Mother.** **2.10 The Big Gervais Show.** **3.40 Don't Trust the B**** in Apartment 23.** **2.25 One Tree Hill 4.10 Desperate Housewives.**

star extra TRAVEL London Theatre Breaks



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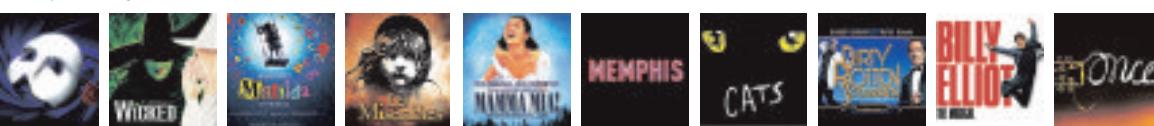
*The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details.

Single rooms subject to availability – supplements apply.

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Please read brochure/web page for full information plus terms and conditions



MONDAY

A Simple Plan, BBC1, 12.20am

Two brothers and a friend stumble on a fortune in unmarked small dollar bills in the wreckage of a plane and decide to squirrel it away for themselves. However, the strain of keeping the cache secret takes its toll as guilt, paranoia and greed change their relationship for ever. Sam Raimi's psychological thriller, starring Bill Paxton, Billy Bob Thornton and Gary Cole. (1998)

TUESDAY

The Kite Runner, BBC1, 11.35pm

The friendship between two boys growing up in Afghanistan – wealthy Amir and Hassan, the son of a servant – is shattered, seemingly for ever, when Amir fails to protect Hassan from a brutal attack and later drives him away to conceal his shame. After years living in exile as a writer in America, an adult Amir returns to his home country to atone for his childhood sins by finding his friend's missing son. Drama, starring Khalid Abdalla and Atossa Leoni. (2007)



Knocked Up, Friday, ITV, 10.40pm

WEDNESDAY

The Ring, BBC1, 12am

A journalist investigates several teenage deaths, which are linked to a cursed videotape and the rumour that anyone who watches it will die a week later. Her growing obsession with the tape endangers herself and her family – and to avoid the predicted fate, she has just seven days to find out where the recording came from. Gore Verbinski's remake of the Japanese supernatural horror, starring Naomi Watts and Brian Cox. (2002)

THURSDAY

Out of Reach, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A woman faces having her family torn apart when her husband enters into a business arrangement with two lifestyle coaches, only to end up joining their cult of followers. She struggles to get him away from their influence, but the conflict grows more serious when the sect tries to gain custody of her daughter. Thriller, starring Erin Karpluk and Lochlyn Munro. (2013)

FRIDAY

Knocked Up, ITV, 10.40pm

Ambitious journalist Alison's one-night stand with directionless layabout Ben has unexpected consequences when she discovers she is pregnant. However, the unlikely parents decide to give the relationship a try for their baby's sake. Romantic comedy, starring Seth Rogen and Katherine Heigl. (2007)

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PICK OF THE WEEK

Historical series hopes to be a novel success

Despite the best efforts of Jonathan Rhys Meyers in The Tudors and Eric Bana in The Other Boleyn Girl, it seems Henry VIII still has a very unglamorous image.

Or as Damian Lewis puts it: "I think we all have this understanding that he was this womanising, syphilitic, bloated, genocidal Elvis character."

However, in new drama series Wolf Hall, adapted from Hilary Mantel's two Booker-prize-winning novels, the actor is hoping we can see beyond the monarch's weight and diseases. It helps that the story is approached from the perspective of Henry's advisor Thomas Cromwell (acclaimed stage actor Mark Rylance).

It's also allowed Lewis to explore another side to the King. "I think what I've found in Henry is that the grandiose, more paranoid, self-indulgent, self-pitying, cruel Henry emerged in the period after this series..."

"What we're trying to concentrate on a little bit is just to give a more varied portrait of Henry, and that's really how this is written. Henry's not

in very much but when we see him there's great variety in his character and his personality..."

"We see him at times frightened by the memory of his mother and I think these are little insights that people won't be used to, you know, and yet there are the similar things there, the vanity is still there, the self importance..."

So it's little wonder that the former Homeland star has mixed feelings about being able to empathise with his character. "The more I read about him the more I was happy – and alarmed – to find that I did share character traits with him."

"I suppose everyone else will be the judge of it, but certainly sitting in the clothes, it feels like a canny piece of casting, because I do feel, I find similarities between myself and him."

He adds: "I think there's no question it helps having had the kind of schooling that I've had [at Eton] to play a King. Just the way, the sort of court structure, hierarchies, the way they're set up, it's something I feel I implicitly understand."

"We'll be able to see just how convincing Lewis is as the six-part series begins with the monarch desperate to produce a male heir, which means ending his marriage to Katherine of Aragon (Joanne Whalley)."

Unfortunately, Cardinal Wolsey (Jonathan Pryce) isn't having much luck in persuading the Pope to annul the union – and if he falls from favour, that will also have a knock-on effect on his protégé, Thomas Cromwell.

When the Cardinal is dismissed as Lord Chancellor, the noble families of England begin jostling for position, keen to become the King's next advisors, but Cromwell is hopeful that the Wolsey will eventually regain Henry's favour.

That could be tricky though, as the Cardinal has made many enemies at court, including one Anne Boleyn (Claire Foy), who still resents him for ending her betrothal to Henry Percy eight years earlier, and could now be in a position to take revenge as the King's rumoured new mistress...



Mark Rylance stars in Wolf Hall, Wednesday, BBC2, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Broadchurch

ITV, 9pm

The little town with a lorry-load of secrets is certainly back with a bang, and true to form, it's once again dominating all conversations, whether at work, down the pub, or about the house. Writer Chris Chibnall has a lot to answer for – his brilliant work seems to be dominating almost all our waking thoughts. He explains: 'In the time we've been off air, we've never stopped working on the show's return. I knew, from the start, that there was another story to tell in the world of Broadchurch: so much so that I'd pitched it to Peter Fincham, Director of Television at ITV, in our very first meeting when he greenlit the first series of the show.' Secrecy has shrouded this second series before now, but in tonight's third episode, Hardy faces a race against time as Ellie discovers startling new evidence. But she's got plenty more on her plate than that, as she comes under pressure from all sides, and life for Mark and Beth is about to change forever.

TUESDAY

The Eichmann Show

BBC2, 9pm

2014 was the year Martin Freeman became officially ubiquitous, starring in the final Hobbit movie, the third series of Sherlock and the acclaimed TV

drama Fargo. His 2015 is shaping up to be just as momentous as he takes a leading role in this timely drama, which is showing to mark the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Set in Jerusalem in 1961, it follows ground-breaking TV producer Milton Fruchtman (Freeman) as he sets about filming the trial of Adolf Eichmann, one of the architects of the Holocaust. First though, he has to convince the judge that cameras belong in the courtroom, and then train up an inexperienced camera team with the help of director Leo Hurwitz (Anthony LaPaglia) an acclaimed filmmaker who had been blacklisted by McCarthy. However, the pair's persistence pays off when the footage gives victims of the Holocaust the chance to share their horrifying experiences with a global audience.

WEDNESDAY

The National Television Awards – Live!

ITV, 7.30pm

The biggest names on the small screen gather at the O2 in London for the annual ceremony celebrating the best of British TV over the past 12 months, as voted for by viewers. Now in its 20th year, the show promises a few surprises, including a cheeky raid by one of the UK's



Broadchurch, Monday, ITV, 9pm

biggest sitcom stars, while host Dermot O'Leary entertains with a dance routine. Benedict Cumberbatch (Sherlock), Maggie Smith (Downton Abbey), Sarah Lancashire (Happy Valley) and Sheridan Smith (Cilla) battle it out in the Drama Performance category, while star makers Simon Cowell, David Walliams and Cheryl Fernandez-Versini are up against star baker Mary Berry for best TV Judge. Other closely fought contests include Serial Drama Performance, which sees EastEnders' Danny Dyer and Kellie Bright (Mick and Linda Carter) go head to head, with further competition from Verity Rushworth (Emmerdale's Donna) and Nikki Sanderson (Hollyoaks' Maxine Minniver).

THURSDAY

Cucumber

Channel 4, 9pm

New series. Sixteen years after the hit Manchester-set series Queer as

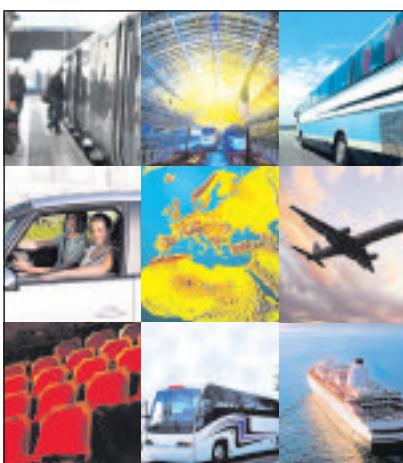
Folk appeared on the small screen, Russell T Davies returns with this drama exploring the passions and pitfalls of 21st-century gay life – one of three interlinked shows for Channel 4, E4 and online. When a 46-year-old man and his long-suffering boyfriend embark on a disastrous date night, nothing will ever be the same again. At work, Henry is drawn to the enigmatic Freddie, while Lance greets newcomer Daniel, but both friendships are set on a course to explode.

FRIDAY

Match of the Day Live

BBC1, 7.30pm

Cambridge United v Manchester United (Kick-off 7.55pm). Gary Lineker presents coverage of the opening FA Cup fourth-round match, which takes place at Abbey Stadium between the respective League Two and Premier League outfits. The hosts are the lowest-ranked club left in the draw, and will be delighted with this money-spinning tie against the 11-time champions, who have already negotiated one tricky fixture away to lower-league opposition in the shape of Yeovil Town in round three. The U's squad contains former United midfielder Luke Chadwick and this is the first meeting between the sides since a two-legged League Cup encounter in 1991, which saw the Red Devils held to a 1-1 draw on this ground.



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Stylish orangery at this four bedroom house



AN EXTENDED four-bedroomed detached residence in Attingham Drive, Dudley, comes with a stylish orangery. It is for sale through Connells at £279,950.

I has an entrance hall with laminate flooring, a lounge with wood-effect laminate flooring and under stairs storage, a kitchen/diner with attractive modern cream units and contrasting working surfaces, a double electric oven with gas hob and cooker hood, fridge, freezer, dishwasher, high gloss tiled flooring and pelmet lighting, an orangery with the same attractive high gloss flooring, spot lights and a self-cleaning glass roof and a utility. A galleried landing leads to a master bedroom en suite with wardrobes, three further bedrooms with wardrobes, a bathroom with bath and double shower cubicle.

There is a driveway, integral garage and a rear garden with a patio and lawn.

Contact Connells on 01384 214770 or visit www.connells.co.uk

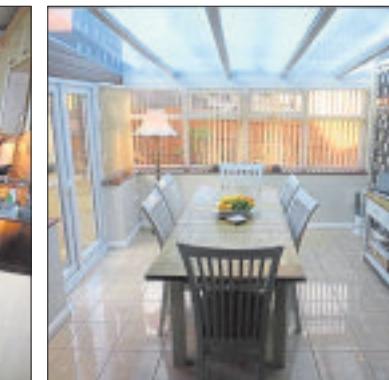
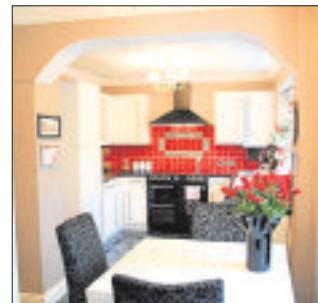


Extended property in popular location

THIS tastefully presented and extended detached family home in Oakham Road, Oakham, Dudley, is a sought-after area.

It is for sale through Wakeman Estate Agents at £265,000.

It has a porch, reception hall, a lounge with an Adam-style fireplace, a kitchen/dining area with a tall storage unit concealing a fridge/freezer, a range cooker with electric hob and a range of ovens beneath, a cooker hood, ceramic tiled floor finish, an archway separating a dining area with French doors opening out onto paved terrace, utility, WC, sitting room, principal bedroom with wardrobes and en suite, three further bedrooms, a bathroom with a bath with shower above, store room, rear garden with a shed. Call 01902 885894 or visit www.wakeman-on-line.com



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179 TIPTON ROAD £145,000

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21 HALL STREET OIRO £123,500

35 PADARN CLOSE £122,000

33 KINGS ROAD £114,950

4 HILL AVENUE £107,500

35 BARNCROFT ROAD £102,950

24 FOSTER AVENUE £100,000

20 HILL AVENUE £84,950

113 WAKEFIELD CRES O/A £73,950

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• En suite shower room off bedroom one
• Extended breakfast kitchen, utility room
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26 SUNNINGDALE ROAD, SEDGLEY £222,500

SEDGLEY
• Extended & improved three bedroom link detached house
• Re-fitted bathroom & additional ground floor shower room
• Lounge/dining room, conservatory, utility room
• Attractively landscaped rear garden with decking area
• SEDGLEY OFFICE - EPC RATING E



10 GROSVENOR ROAD, ETTINGSHALL PARK £219,950

SEDGLEY
• Extended house with three double bedrooms
• Extended & well maintained accommodation
• Extended 'L' shaped kitchen and utility area
• Larger than average attractively landscaped gardens
• SEDGLEY OFFICE - EPC RATING D



50 CLAREMONT ROAD Offers Around £199,950

SEDGLEY
• Victorian style detached house
• Three bedrooms & recently re-fitted bathroom
• Extended kitchen & downstairs shower room,
• Attractively landscaped west-facing rear garden
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8 FIELDSTONE VIEW £199,500

LOWER GORNAL
• Attractive modern three bedroom detached house
• Set well back from the road
• Enhanced property with conservatory
• Gas central heating & double glazing, detached garage
• SEDGLEY OFFICE - EPC RATING D



179 TIPTON ROAD £145,000

TIPTON
• Spacious victorian terraced house
• Two large bedrooms
• Re-fitted kitchen & bathroom
• Secure parking at rear
• SEDGLEY OFFICE - EPC RATING E



1A COPPIE ROAD £184,950

COSELEY
• Improved end of terraced residence
• Three bedrooms
• Separate self contained one bedroom annexe
• Double garage, large back garden area
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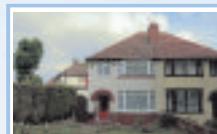
13 BREEN RYDDING DRIVE OIRO £172,500

COSELEY
• Three bedroom semi detached house
• Improved & extended accommodation
• Living room & dining area, conservatory
• Study/sitting room, large bathroom
• SEDGLEY OFFICE - EPC RATING C



4 OAKLEIGH DRIVE £154,995

SEDGLEY
• Extended town house
• Three bedrooms
• Well maintained accommodation
• Good sized rear garden
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10 CHESTNUT AVENUE OIRO £148,000

DUDLEY
• Extended semi detached house
• Three bedrooms
• Extended through living room
• Double glazing & gas central heating
• SEDGLEY OFFICE - EPC RATING E



179 TIPTON ROAD £145,000

WOODSETTON
• Spacious victorian terraced house
• Two large bedrooms
• Re-fitted kitchen & bathroom
• Secure parking at rear
• SEDGLEY OFFICE - EPC RATING E



55A SPRING ROAD £139,950

LANESFIELD
• Modern three bedroom detached house
• Extended, well maintained & attractively presented
• Situated in a pleasant cul-de-sac location
• Attached garage & easily maintained private rear garden
• SEDGLEY OFFICE - EPC RATING D



21 HALL STREET OIRO £123,500

CRADLEY HEATH
• Modern semi detached house
• Three bedrooms
• Well proportioned accommodation
• Gas central heating
• SEDGLEY OFFICE - EPC RATING D



35 PADARN CLOSE £122,000

SEDGLEY
• Modern terraced house
• Three bedrooms
• Ideal first time purchase / investment purchase
• Shower room, car parking space
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33 KINGS ROAD £114,950

SEDGLEY
• Considerably improved mid terraced house
• Two bedrooms
• Well presented accommodation
• Gas centrally heated & double glazed
• SEDGLEY OFFICE - EPC RATING D



4 HILL AVENUE £107,500

LANESFIELD
• Semi Detached house
• Three bedrooms
• Well maintained & improved
• Two bedrooms
• Two reception rooms
• Gas central heating & double glazing
• SEDGLEY OFFICE - EPC RATING C



35 BARNCROFT ROAD £102,950

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• Three bedrooms
• Well maintained & improved
• Two bedrooms
• Lounge, dining area/kitchen
• Gas central heating & double glazing
• SEDGLEY OFFICE - EPC RATING C



24 FOSTER AVENUE £100,000

COSELEY
• Terraced house
• Three bedrooms
• Lounge, dining area/kitchen
• Gas central heating & double glazing
• SEDGLEY OFFICE - EPC RATING C



20 HILL AVENUE £84,950

LANESFIELD
• Semi detached house
• One bedroom
• One bathroom
• Communal gardens
• SEDGLEY OFFICE - EPC RATING C



113 WAKEFIELD CRES O/A £73,950

SEDGLEY
• First floor flat
• One bedroom
• One bathroom
• Communal gardens
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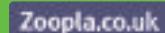
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Offers in the region of £349,950



MILKING BANK AREA, Berkswell Close

Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached comprising: hall, cloakroom, lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room. Bedroom suite with bathroom beyond. 3 bedrooms (2nd bedroom with en suite), bathroom, garage, garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £264,950



WOODSETTON, Bosworth Close, 'The Poplars'

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SEDGLEY, Off Lime Road, The Bungalow

Approached from Lime Road, EXTENDED, gas centrally heated, double glazed FOUR/FIVE bedroom detached family residence with DISTANT VIEWS comprising: hall, two through living rooms, sitting room, CONSERVATORY, shower room, kitchen, lobby, two double bedrooms. To first floor two further bedrooms (one with en suite) Parking, gardens. EPC: D, SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £255,000



DUDLEY, Mansion Close, 'Earls Keep'

Gas centrally heated, uPVC double glazed detached on corner plot with landscaped grounds in cul de sac with Hall, fitted cloaks, lounge, dining room, breakfast kitchen, utility. FOUR BEDROOMS (principle with wardrobes & shower en suite), bathroom, garage, delightful garden forming a fine feature. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the Region of £244,000



KINGSWINFORD, Celandine Close

Delightfully located within this highly desirable cul de sac, this MODERN LINK DETACHED BUNGALOW offers a generous layout which requires some cosmetic updating, plus LONG DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and an attractive / secluded rear garden. EPC: D

No upward chain

£209,950



KINGSWINFORD, Cross Street

Superbly located within Kingswinford's desirable 'Old Quarter', this VERY DECEPTIVE LINK-DETACHED FAMILY HOME requires some cosmetic updating, yet offers THREE BEDROOMS and an EN-SUITE, plus DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and a large rear garden. EPC: E

No upward chain



GORNAL WOOD, Summit Place

Tremendously enhanced, Freehold, gas centrally heated & double glazed detached family home comprising: hall, cloakroom, transverse lounge, dining room, store, refitted kitchen with range of maple effect finish units. FOUR BEDROOMS, bathroom with white suite, garage, delightful gardens. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £195,000



SEDGLEY, Dormston Drive

Situated within walking distance of Bull Ring; a gas radiator centrally heated, uPVC double glazed detached comprising: hallway, cloaks, 24'5" through living/dining room, kitchen. Three bedrooms, bathroom, block paving, garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £162,950



PENSNETT, Dreadnought Road

AN EXTENDED & BEAUTIFULLY IMPROVED SEMI-DETACHED FAMILY HOME offering IMPRESSIVELY SPACIOUS and ATTRACTIVELY APPOINTED accommodation which is READY TO MOVE INTO, plus LONG DRIVEWAY, REAR GARAGE and 'SUNNY' LANDSCAPED REAR GARDEN. EPC: D

New price

£159,950



GORNAL WOOD, Himley Road

Tremendous potential! Gas centrally heated & uPVC/ aluminium double glazed semi detached with porch, hall, lounge, pantry, dining room, kitchen with replacement units, three bedrooms, bathroom, garage, garden. EPC: E. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £159,950



LOWER GORNAL, Summer Lane

Mostly double glazed gas centrally heated Period home with LARGE ATTACHED WORKSHOPS occupying a generous plot. NO UPWARD CHAIN - With lounge, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, two first double bedrooms; two large workshops attached office, driveway, garden area. EPC: E. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £159,950



WOMBOURNE, Forge Valley Way

An IMPRESSIVE 3 BEDROOM, SEMI-DETACHED HOUSE on the fringes of beautiful open countryside, offering a VERY WELL APPOINTED/ BEAUTIFULLY PRESENTED layout with LARGE FRONT/SIDE DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and a good sized level private rear garden. EPC: TBA

£152,950



SEDGLEY, Gospel End Street

Quaint, gas centrally heated & double glazed 19th century cottage in Conservation Area comprehensively restored with Sitting room (Inglenook / woodburner), breakfast kitchen (granite work surfaces), cellar. Principal bedroom (lofted ceiling, exposed beams) further bedroom, shower room, garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £119,950



DUDLEY, Garrick Close, Earls Keep

MAGNIFICENT VIEWS, double glazed, CENTRALLY HEATED, 2nd Floor Apartment with 'entry phone' system comprising hall, two bedrooms (one with wardrobes), bathroom, living/dining room, kitchen. Communal grounds, parking. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the Region of £117,950



DUDLEY, Cardoness Place

Stylish, double glazed, gas centrally heated, intermediate starter home with entrance hallway, lounge, recently refitted breakfast 'Avanti' kitchen, two bedrooms, bathroom with white suite, off road parking, garden. EPC: T.B.A. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £114,950



LOWER GORNAL, Lake Street

A spacious, gas centrally heated, part uPVC double glazed end terrace with potential - advantage of GATED PARKING comprising: living room, cellar, dining room, upgraded kitchen. Two double bedrooms, bathroom with white suite. Garden. EPC: F. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £109,950



DUDLEY, Wrens Nest Road

Tremendously improved! Gas centrally heated, double glazed semi-detached that has been 'transformed' by present vendors comprising: hallway, lounge, utility section, store, kitchen, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom. Gated parking, garden. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £109,950



SEDGLEY, Cotwall End Road

Gas centrally heated, double glazed detached for improvement with PANORAMIC VIEWS comprising; hall, cloaks, L shape living room with views, kitchen, veranda. Double bedroom 3, bathroom, dining room, garden room. To first floor Two bedrooms. Garage, garden. EPC:E. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £256,000



DUDLEY, Wistmans Close, Milking Bank

Sited at head of cul-de-sac a gas centrally heated UPVC DOUBLE GLAZED detached family home comprising; reception hall, lounge, dining room with patio doors, good sized kitchen, pantry, utility room, fitted cloaks. FOUR bedrooms (principal bedroom with shower room en suite), bathroom, garage, block paved fore garden, secluded rear garden. EPC:T.B.A. SEDGLEY



DUDLEY, Osberton Drive, Milking Bank

Significantly ENLARGED, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached comprising; entrance hallway, lounge, refitted kitchen with a fine range of 'light beech' effect units, pantry, L-shape utility room, cloakroom, store, dining/family room. Three bedrooms, bathroom (incorporating 'whirl pool' bath). Garden with distant views, block paved garden. EPC:T.B.A SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £239,950

Offers in the region of £173,950



LOWER GORNAL, Woodland Grove

Just off Brick Kiln Lane; EXTENDED, gas centrally heated, primarily uPVC double glazed detached comprising; hall, lounge, dining room, store, kitchen, utility room, cloaks/shower room. Three bedrooms, bathroom. Garage, garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY



SEDGLEY, South View Road, Northway

SPECTACULAR KITCHEN! Personal inspection imperative to appreciate kitchen. Gas centrally heated & double glazed accommodation includes porch, hall, dining room, lounge, three beds, bathroom, garden, parking. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £194,950

New price WAS £182,500, NOW £180,000

NEW DEVELOPMENT,- Plot 1, Mount Road, LANESFIELD

Just TWO, gas centrally heated & double glazed detached bungalows nearing completion comprising; hall, two bedrooms, bathroom with white suite, lounge, kitchen with range of units. GARAGE. Further details Sedgley Office, SAP:TBA
PLOT 1: O/A £169,950



LOWER GORNAL, Humphrey Street

NO UPWARD CHAIN. DOUBLE GLAZED, gas centrally heated detached, conscientiously maintained although offers further potential; Porch, hall, living room, dining room, refitted kitchen, utility, toilet. Three bedrooms, bathroom. Garage, garden, EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £169,950



DUDLEY, Malthouse Drive

Exceptionally stylish - gas centrally heated, double glazed detached with; hallway, cloaks, lounge, dining room, CONSERVATORY, kitchen, bedroom with shower room en suite, two further bedrooms, bathroom garage, garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £165,000



TIPTON, Wrens Avenue

Conscientiously maintained. Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached of character comprising; porch, reception hall, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, pantry. Three bedrooms, bathroom. Garage, garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY



SEDGLEY/WOODSETTON, Roper Way

Stylish, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached comprising; entrance hallway, 16'10" lounge, understairs store, REFITTED kitchen. Two bedrooms, bathroom (heated floor), 17'3" x 10'1" garage, garden. EPC: T.B.A SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £141,950

Offers in the region of £130,000



WOODSETTON, Parkes Hall Road

Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached comprising; porch, hall, store. Ground floor accomm. has been 'opened up' to provide lounge & kitchen. Three bedrooms, bathroom. Parking, garden, possible rear vehicular access (subject to licence fee to Council). EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £124,950



COSELEY, Keats Drive

Freehold, gas centrally heated, DOUBLE GLAZED semi detached with DOUBLE GARAGE set in quiet backwater just off Siddons Road. Accommodation comprises; hall, lounge, kitchen with integrated appliances, pantry, dining room, three bedrooms, bathroom, toilet, driveway, garage, garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £122,950



DUDLEY, Old Park Road

ENLARGED, gas centrally heated, primarily uPVC double glazed semi detached being conscientiously maintained & comprising; hall, living/dining room, kitchen. Three bedrooms, bathroom, loft. Parking, garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £119,995



LOWER GORNAL, Park Road

Gas centrally heated semi detached with potential comprising hall, lounge, store, kitchen, dining room (with patio doors). Two double bedrooms, bathroom; separate toilet. Secluded rear garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £97,750



SEDGLEY, Tirls Hill Court, Tipton Road

Conveniently situated gas centrally heated and uPVC double glazed GROUND FLOOR flat within short distance of fields & other amenities comprising hallway, lounge, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, communal grounds, garage. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the Region of £79,950



COSELEY, Horace Street, Hurst Hill

Gas centrally heated one bedroom Second floor flat with NO UPWARD CHAIN representing an ideal first time buy comprising; secure communal entrance & stairs, private hall, lounge, kitchen, double bedroom, bathroom. Communal grounds. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £50,000



LOWER GORNAL, Five Ways Court, Lake Street

50% SHARE FOR SALE. Gas centrally heated, double glazed FIRST FLOOR flat. Vendors 50% share available for sale (other 50% owners by Housing Association who charge a fair market rental).comprising; hall, lounge with well equipped kitchen, TWO BEDROOMS (principal bedroom with shower room en suite), bathroom. Parking, communal grounds. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

0/A £49,950 for vendors 50%



KINGSWINFORD, Fairlawn Drive

NOTICE OF OFFER 42 Fairlawn Drive Kingswinford, West Midlands, DY6 8PE. By order of the mortgagees in possession, we would advise that an offer has been made for the above property in the sum of £160,200. Any person wishing to increase on this offer should notify the selling agents of their best offer either prior to exchange or within the next 7 days which ever is sooner. Taylors Estate Agents, 818 High Street, Kingswinford, West Midlands, DY6 8AA. Tel: 01384 401777



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1 bed

Red Lion Close, TIVIDALE

NEW



Attention Investors and First time buyers! Don't miss out on this opportunity to acquire this brilliant buy to let investment or starter home. You could move a tenant or yourself straight in to the well maintained one bedroom first floor maisonette. Red Lion Close is a popular residential location and there are shops and amenities near by, there is the added benefit of the property being near to Junction 2 of the M5 and other routes in to Birmingham. Benefiting from open plan lounge and kitchen, bedroom and bathroom along with a garage in a nearby block. An early viewing is recommended!

EPC: E

Netherton Office

£64,950

4 bed

Tansley Hill Road, OAKHAM

NEW



Chichester Avenue, NETHERTON

NEW

EPC: D

The Property Shop is pleased to offer this two bedroom, double glazed mid terrace property situated on the sought after Netherton Estate, close to local schools, shops and road links. This is an excellent opportunity for first time buyers looking for a starter home and investors alike due to the high rental demand in the area. The property has accommodation comprising Entrance hall, lounge/diner, kitchen, two bedrooms, bathroom, rear garden. To the front of the property is a drive way and there is the added benefit of a garage in a nearby block. Call us now to book an early viewing so as to not miss out on this great prospect!

Netherton Office

£101,950

4 bed

Tansley Hill Road, OAKHAM

NEW



2 bed Ryan Place, NETHERTON

NEW



This property is ideal for first time buyers or investors, the property is situated in a quite cul-de-sac location in Netherton close to local schools, shops and road link. The property comprises of: Lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, two bedrooms, family bathroom, double glazing and central heating, drive way to front and rear garden. A viewing is highly recommended.

Netherton Office

£91,950

3 bed

St Peters Road, NETHERTON

NEW PRICE



3 bed Trejon Road, CRADLEY HEATH

NEW PRICE



The Property Shop is pleased to offer the three bedroom traditional bay fronted detached home in need of minor cosmetic updating. This property is being situated in a highly sought after location out of Barns Pit offering a quiet area ideal for families with children. There is excellent access to all local amenities and transport links. The property has accommodation comprising of a spacious entrance porch, which leads through to the entrance hallway. There are two reception rooms, kitchen, conservatory and downstairs bathroom (which could be removed without a trace). To the first floor are three bedrooms and a family bathroom, double glazing and central heating. Double glazing and a really good sized landscaped rear garden. An early viewing is a must to not miss out on this wonderful home. Call on 01384 550 600 to book your viewing.

Netherton Office

£154,950

2 bed

Greaves Road, NETHERTON



2 bed Dudley Road, ROWLEY REGIS

NEW PRICE



Offers are invited for this property situated on this excellent sized plot. Providing potential for re-development of the site subject to planning permission. The property being offered requires complete refurbishment and has accommodation to comprise of: Entrance Hallway, Two Reception Rooms, Kitchen, downstairs W.C, storage area and lean to utility space. Benefits from off road parking to the front, with lawn front garden, gated vehicle access to the side provides access to the rear plot currently with large garage and various outbuildings. A viewing is a must to appreciate the size of the plot and property on offer!

Netherton Office

Offers Around £140,000

2 bed

Moncrieffe Close, DUDLEY

EPC: C



3 bed Quarry Road, DUDLEY WOOD

NEW PRICE



4 bed Mucklow Hill, HALESOWEN

EPC: D

We are delighted to introduce to the discerning buyer this spacious four bedroom family home situated in a popular location close to local schools and amenities. This is an excellent opportunity for families and couples alike. The property offers accommodation comprising of: Entrance hall, lounge, kitchen/diner, two double bedrooms, family bathroom, double glazing and central heating, double garage and a large garden. A viewing is highly recommended to appreciate the accommodation on offer.

Netherton Office

Offers Around £44,750

2 bed

Hall Street, CRADLEY HEATH

EPC: D



3 bed Marlow Close, NETHERTON

EPC: D



6 bed Baffery Road, DUDLEY

EPC: D



6 bed Baffery Road, DUDLEY

EPC: D

WOW! A rare opportunity to purchase a six BEDROOM semi detached family home. This is a fantastic purchase for the larger family or possibly an ideal investment property to multiple let. The property is subject to planning permission to extend the property (subject to planning permission). The property has accommodation comprising of: Entrance hall, two reception rooms, kitchen/diner, ground floor shower room, down stairs bathroom, four bedrooms, family bathroom, double glazing, gas central heating and double garage. Block paved driveway to the front providing parking for a number of vehicles and rear garden. Also with the added benefit of NO UPWARD CHAIN.

Netherton Office

Offers Around £224,950

2 bed

Crabourne Road, DUDLEY WOOD

EPC: F



2 bed Lodgefield Road, HALESOWEN

EPC: D



3 bed Buckingham Road, ROWLEY REGIS

EPC: D



2 bed Church Street, CRADLEY HEATH

EPC: E



2 bed Moncrieffe Close, DUDLEY

EPC: F



2 bed Church Street, CRADLEY HEATH

EPC: F



2 bed Moncrieffe Close, DUDLEY

EPC: F



2 bed Church Street, CRADLEY HEATH

EPC: E



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Stourbridge Sales & Lettings : 01384 444 645

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<p>3 bed</p> <p>Chichester Avenue, NETHERTON</p> <p></p> <p>NEW</p> <p>A rare opportunity to acquire this three bedroom end of terrace on this ever popular estate close to all amenities. This is an excellent opportunity for families and couples alike. The property comprises of: Entrance hall, kitchen, lounge/diner, three bedrooms, good size family bathroom , drive way and integral garage to the front and rear garden. A viewing is recommended for this highly popular estate.</p> <p>EPC: D</p> <p>Netherton Office £119,950</p>	<p>3 bed</p> <p>Highfield Road, ROWLEY REGIS</p> <p></p> <p>NEW</p> <p>Not to be missed! This spacious three bedroom mid terrace property is situated within walking distance to local shops with road and railway links just a short drive away. The property comprises of: Lounge, dining room, breakfast kitchen, ground floor bathroom and three bedrooms. The accommodation is double glazed and centrally heated (where specified) and there is a rear garden. A viewing is highly recommended to fully appreciate this property.</p> <p>EPC: E</p> <p>Netherton Office £99,995</p>	<p>3 bed</p> <p>Cradley Road, NETHERTON</p> <p></p> <p>NEW</p> <p>Fantastic opportunity to purchase this three bedroom semi situated in a popular area of Netherton. This would make an ideal purchase for a buyer who wishes to put their own stamp on their property. Within walking distance to local schools and shops. The property comprises of: Entrance hall, lounge, kitchen/diner, three bedrooms, family bathroom, double glazed and centrally heated, driveway and garage to the front and rear garden.</p> <p>EPC: E</p> <p>Netherton Office £124,995</p>
<p>3 bed</p> <p>Windmill End, NETHERTON</p> <p></p> <p>NEW PRICE</p> <p>A spacious semi detached property offering three good sized bedrooms on a larger than average plot. A buyer could take advantage of an opportunity to put their own stamp on this home! This is a popular residential address close to local schools, amenities and road links. The property comprises of: Lounge, dining room, kitchen, useful ground floor w.c., three good sized bedrooms, family bathroom, double garage, driveway, rear garden and central heating and double glazing (where specified). A viewing is highly recommended to appreciate the size of property on offer.</p> <p>EPC: D</p> <p>Netherton Office Offers Over £125,000</p>	<p>2 bed</p> <p>Lyttleton House, Blackberry Lane, HALESOWEN</p> <p></p> <p>NEW PRICE</p> <p>We are pleased to offer For Sale this well presented and spacious two bedroom retirement apartment. Available with NO UPWARD CHAIN, the apartment is situated at the rear of the building overlooking the communal gardens with commanding views over green belt land. The property offers good sized accommodation to comprise of: Entrance Hall, Lounge, Two Bedrooms, Kitchen and Bathroom. Double Glazing (Where Specified) and Storage Heating. The property also benefits from secure entry system, lift to all floors, access to the communal residents lounge, laundry room, communal gardens and car parking.</p> <p>EPC: C</p> <p>Netherton Office Offers Around £114,995</p>	<p>3 bed</p> <p>Griffin Street, NETHERTON</p> <p></p> <p>NEW PRICE</p> <p>An opportunity to purchase a deceptively spacious and well maintained three bedroom modern semi detached situated close to local school amenities and road links. The property comprises of: Large entrance hall, lounge, conservatory, new kitchen, dining room, three bedrooms, family bathroom, double glazing and gas central heating with recently fitted boiler, garage and drive to the front, good sized rear garden, garage a brick built out building and summerhouse. A viewing is highly recommended to appreciate the size of accommodation on offer.</p> <p>EPC: E</p> <p>Netherton Office Offers Around £136,950</p>
<p>3 bed</p> <p>St Georges Road, NETHERTON</p> <p></p> <p>The Property Shop would like to offer an opportunity to acquire a well maintained three bedroom semi detached property situated in a popular residential location close to local schools, amenities and road links. The estate in which this home is situated is quiet and family orientated and would make a perfect purchase for first time buyers, couples and families alike. The property comprises of: Entrance hall, lounge, fitted kitchen diner, conservatory, three bedrooms, family bathroom, gas central heating and double glazing, rear garden and front side drive way providing ample parking.</p> <p>EPC: D</p> <p>Netherton Office Offers Around £114,995</p>	<p>2 bed</p> <p>Southalls Lane, DUDLEY</p> <p></p> <p>An opportunity to acquire a well maintained two bedroom mid terrace property conveniently situated close to local schools, amenities and road links. This is an excellent opportunity for first time buyers, couples and investors alike. The property comprises of: Dining room, cellar, lounge, kitchen, bedroom one and bathroom on the first floor and second bedroom and store room on the second floor, gas central heating, double glazing and yard to the rear.</p> <p>EPC: D</p> <p>Netherton Office £85,000</p>	<p>3 bed</p> <p>Forest Road, OLDBURY</p> <p></p> <p>A much improved and extended three double bedroom home. Situated in this highly convenient location with excellent access to local amenities and Birmingham City centre. The property offers good sized accommodation to comprise of: Entrance Hall, Two good sized reception rooms. Extended kitchen diner, utility room, downstairs w.c., to the first floor is three double bedrooms with en-suite to main bedroom and family bathroom. The property also benefits from being double glazed, gas centrally heated with ample off road parking, integral garage and rear garden.</p> <p>EPC: D</p> <p>Netherton Office Offers Around £234,950</p>
<p>2 bed</p> <p>Denbigh Close, DUDLEY</p> <p></p> <p>EPC: C</p> <p>We are pleased to offer for sale this well presented two bedroom semi-detached property benefiting from being situated at the head of this quiet cul-de-sac and benefiting from two bedrooms and bathroom to the first floor. The property benefits from being gas centrally heated (Where Specified), Double Glazing (Where Specified), block paved driveway for two cars and a landscaped rear garden. An early viewing is highly recommended to avoid disappointment.</p> <p>Netherton Office £124,950</p>	<p>4 bed</p> <p>Worcester Road, NETHERTON</p> <p></p> <p>EPC: D</p> <p>This surprisingly spacious four bedroom home is situated in a popular residential estate with accommodation comprising: entrance hall, lounge, downstairs w.c., kitchen/diner and on the first floor are four bedrooms and a family bathroom. The property benefits from off road parking and has a pleasant rear garden. Viewing is highly recommended to appreciate the size of property on offer.</p> <p>Netherton Office Offers Over £110,000</p>	<p>3 bed</p> <p>Yew Tree Road, NETHERTON</p> <p></p> <p>EPC: G</p> <p>An opportunity to acquire a well maintained three bedroom semi detached property situated in a popular residential location close to local schools, amenities and road links. This is an excellent opportunity for first time buyers, families and couples alike. The property comprises of: Entrance hall, lounge, kitchen, ground floor bathroom, three bedrooms, first floor w.c., double glazing and gas central heating, drive way to the front and rear garden. Available with NO UPWARD CHAIN.</p> <p>Netherton Office Offers Around £99,950</p>
<p>2 bed</p> <p>York Road, NETHERTON</p> <p></p> <p>EPC: D</p> <p>We are pleased to offer for sale this well presented two bedroom semi-detached home situated on this substantial corner plot providing ample off road parking and good sized front and rear gardens. The property itself benefits from accommodation to comprise of: Entrance hall, hall, kitchen, lounge, two bedrooms and a family bathroom to the first floor. The property also benefits from being gas centrally heated and double glazed with off road parking to the front and low maintenance rear garden. Internal viewing is strongly recommended to fully appreciate.</p> <p>Netherton Office Offers Around £98,500</p>	<p>3 bed</p> <p>Kingsley Street, NETHERTON</p> <p></p> <p>EPC: D</p> <p>This three bedroom, three storey traditional terraced home is situated in this convenient back-to-school location close to all local amenities and has accommodation comprising of: Lounge, breakfast kitchen, two bedrooms and a family bathroom to the first floor with stairs rising to the left conversion providing a third bedroom. The property also benefits from being gas centrally heated and double glazed with a courtyard style rear garden. Viewing is recommended to appreciate the accommodation on offer.</p> <p>Netherton Office Offers Around £84,950</p>	<p>4 bed</p> <p>Stretton Place, NETHERTON</p> <p></p> <p>EPC: D</p> <p>The Property Shop offers For Sale this four bedroom end-lower house with part double glazing to rear. Situated in a popular residential location close to local schools, amenities and road links. The property comprises of: Entrance hall, lounge, kitchen, ground floor w.c., family bathroom, four bedrooms. Being double glazed and part centrally heated with a front garden, drive way and garden to rear an early viewing highly recommended.</p> <p>Netherton Office Offers Around £115,000</p>



With an average of over 96% of asking prices achieved, why not let The Property Shop unlock the value of your home?!

...TAKE A LOOK AT OUR RECENT SUCCESS RATES:

Address	Viewings	Offers	% of asking price achieved
Swan Street	11	3	97%
Marriott Road	15	1	94%
Beeches View Avenue	27	1	96%
Habberley Road	11	3	102%
Crabourne Road	6	1	98%
Colley Lane	10	1	92%
St Kenelms Avenue	28	4	94%
Crabourne Road	13	1	98%
Old Park Road	9	1	98%
Lantern Road	10	1	96%
Saltwells Road	4	1	97%

This data is correct at date of printing and is based on "Sold Subject to Contract" and "Completed" data.

If you are already on the market please consider the terms of your current Agency Agreement to avoid the possibility of paying two commission fees.

Call the only Estate Agent in Netherton on 01384 456 022 to book a free market appraisal?

Jon Stanier

01384 77877

Your satisfaction is our future!



NEW

BRIERLEY HILL STOURBRIDGE ROAD

Pleasantly situated with panoramic views to the rear from this very convenient address, this spacious Traditional 4 Bed Detached provides GAS CENTRALLY HEATED and mostly UPVC DOUBLE GLAZED accom ideal for the young or growing family. Hall, sep Dining Room, extended Kitchen, 4 well proportioned Bedrooms, SUPERB LARGE FITTED BATHROOM with sep Shower, further home Bathroom, Garage, driveway for 2 cars and splendid large lawned Rear Gardens with pleasant private outlook. EPC=E

Offers around £179,950

NEW

PENSNETT COMBER DRIVE

Pleasantly situated in this popular and convenient address this Modern 3 Bed Semi-Detached provides spacious GAS CENTRALLY HEATED and UPVC DOUBLE GLAZED accom ideal for the young family or First Time Buyer and is available with NO UPWARD CHAIN. Hall, Downs W.C., Lounge, Kitchen with Dining Area, 3 well proportioned Bedrooms, REFITTED SHOWER ROOM, Garage, Lawned Front with GARAGE and lawned foregarden with pedestrian access only. EPC=F

Offers around £119,950

NEW

MERRY HILL THE EMBANKMENT

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REDUCED

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Pleasantly situated in this popular and convenient address, this 3 Bedroom End Terrace provides deceptively spacious GAS CENTRALLY HEATED and UPVC DOUBLE GLAZED accom tucked away in this convenient address and reached by a private driveway. Ideally suited to the Professional Singles or INVESTOR. Briefly comprises: Spacious Lounge, sep Sitting/Dining Room, large Kitchen with built in oven and hob, 3 well proportioned Bedrooms and small enclosed yard/garden to the rear. Available with NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC=D

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REDUCED

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EPC RATING F • Extended Semi Detached Property • Three Bedrooms • Lounge • Dining Room Having Patio Doors To Garden • Extended Fitted Kitchen • Double Glazing Where Stated • Garage • Driveway Parking • Enclosed Rear Garden • Cul-De-Sac Location • Bathroom

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EPC RATING C • EXTENDED Semi Detached Property • Three Bedrooms • Two Reception Rooms • Extended Fitted Kitchen Dining Room • Ground Floor • Double Glazing Where Stated • Gas Central Heating System • Driveway Parking • Rear Garden • Double Glazing Where Stated • Gas Central Heating System

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Small hatch that's big on power and sets the pace

By David Banner

The Ford Fiesta Zetec-S Red and Black Editions pack a 140PS punch from their tiny 1.0-litre engines.

Ford's Fiesta has been a hit when fitted with the 1.0-litre Ecoboost three-cylinder engine and these Zetec-S Black and Red Editions are the most extreme versions yet, with 140PS from the tiny three-pot.

They look racy, will hit 62mph in nine seconds and start at less than £15,000.

About 40 years ago, Ford built a 5.0-litre V8 version of the Mustang. Developing 140PS, it was tested by Road and Track magazine and recorded a speed to 60mph of 10.5 seconds, eventually running out of ideas at 106mph. The 'metric Mustang' as it was called, ditched the old cubic inch capacity labelling and switched to litres. These days Ford can do amazing things with a litre.

The Fiesta Zetec-S Black and Red Editions use 1.0 litres of cubic capacity to amazing effect, matching the 5.0-litre Mustang's power output, easily bettering its performance and handling and offering fuel economy that Ford engineers would once have thought pure fantasy.

Tweaked

You might well have seen the 80, 100 and 125PS versions of the Ecoboost 1.0-litre engines before, but Ford's engineers have tweaked the powerplant to offer up a few more ponies.

Not only does the 140PS output make these Fiestas the most powerful 1.0-litre volume production cars ever but you also get more power per litre than in a Bugatti Veyron or a Lamborghini Aventador.

This results in some fairly crisp acceleration figures, the lightweight powerplant helping the Fiesta to 62mph in just nine seconds and topping out at 125mph. In fact, this engine delivers more than twice the specific output per litre than its predecessor – the 1.6-litre 100PS engine that powered the Fiesta S just 10 years ago.

Like all the Ecoboost engines, this one uses turbocharger to plump up the mid-range torque, and the three-cylinder powerplant features twin-independent variable cam timing and high-pressure direct-injection technologies.

The Red and Black Editions also get revised gear ratios for the five-speed manual transmission and a more focused suspension set-up.

In addition to new shock absorber and spring settings, the sport suspension uses a stiffer rear axle and revised tuning for the electronic power assisted steering system to deliver more detailed feedback through the wheel.

As the name suggests, the Zetec-S Red

and Black Edition versions of the Fiesta come in very specific colour schemes.

These two-tone models are available in Race Red, complemented by Panther Black roof and detailing; or Panther Black, with Race Red roof and detailing. The three-door models feature front upper and lower grille surrounds, front bumper aerofoil and mirror caps in contrasting colours, with standard black 17in alloy wheels.

Inside, you'll find a black leather sports steering wheel and gear lever gaiter with red stitching, black floor mats with red stitching and charcoal black sport seats with contrasting red stitching and bolster exteriors. The rising beltline of the Fiesta in profile doesn't seem to bode well for the rear seat passengers in the three-door car but there's surprisingly decent legroom and headroom that's manageable even for a six-footer.

Prices start at around £16,000, which might seem quite a lot for a Fiesta with a 1.0-litre powerplant but this unit develops the same power output as the engine you'd get in a similarly-priced SEAT Ibiza 1.4 TSI and Ford has levered in quite a bit of kit as well.

As well as the tuned suspension, revised steering, body styling parts and alloy wheels, you get equipment like stability control, anti-lock brakes, seven airbags, a Quickclear windscreen, a trip computer, a CD player with controls on the steering wheel, central locking and electric heated mirrors.

The EasyFuel cap-less refuelling system is also very slick.

Cheaper

Obvious rivals include the SEAT and Suzuki's Swift Sport, which develops 136PS and is just over a grand cheaper.

Perhaps the biggest threat to this car is the fact that Ford's brilliant Fiesta ST – all 182PS of it – starts at just £17,250.

At the risk of sounding like a scratched record, it's worth bearing in mind that these tiny, high output engines never make anything like the promised fuel economy. Ford quotes a figure of 62.8mpg on the combined cycle, but should you average over 40mpg, you'll be doing fairly well. Emissions are rated at just 104g/km, which is a brilliant figure for what is ostensibly a performance hatch.

For all the carpaving about fuel economy, getting better than 40mpg from such a quick and capable petrol-engined car isn't all that bad. Residual values will reflect the fact that the Fiesta is a brilliant driver's car and one that needn't be expensive to fuel, tax or insure.

Yes, you're limited on colour and the black car with the red contrasts is only going to suit the more extrovert buyers but it's hard to think of anything more fun for fifteen grand.



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Super cool Leon Cupra – grace with lots of pace

By Matt Kimberley

I'm going to start at the end. Having this car parked outside my flat for the last six months has been a privilege.

It reminds me every time I drive it that there are fast, fun cars out there that you don't need to thrash around like you're a hormone-charged teenager. It's a car in which you can chill out just as much as go sports car-baiting – but boy, is it good at the latter.

First let me sum up the performance. When you let it loose, the Cupra 280 runs riot like a furiously territorial bulldog. It rampages through the DSG gearbox with the front tyres on the limit, slamming each new ratio home with a satisfying whump in the back and a cheeky purr from the twin exhausts.

I reckon it could – and should – be a bit louder in Cupra mode, the angriest of the four driving mode selector options. When Comfort and Individual modes can take care of the quiet, relaxed, everyday thing, there's no reason to hold back with Cupra.

The VAQ triple-clutch differential assist on the front axis is worth its weight in unobtanium, managing the immense torque across the grippy front Bridgestones to devastating effect. Dry weather traction is unbelievable: violent, relentless and intoxicating. Your tyre fitter will thank you for the extra business if you enjoy it too often.

The DSG gearbox is a thorn in the car's side. It's a bit fragile, so torque has to be limited and fed in slowly when the turbo first spools up. It helps to make the automatic Cupra the gentler and more relaxed option compared to the manual, but the latter is more immediate, more explosive, more raw and, believe it or not, smoother – unless you're a complete dunce with the clutch.

Additional

Then there's the lack of real manual control to boost the sense of driving involvement. If you don't shift up in time, it'll do it for you, so if you're just a fraction late with the shift paddle, you end up switching two gears instead of one. It could definitely be implemented better. At the additional price it commands, it's hard to recommend DSG.

But either way, having that swell of torque on tap is a joy even if you only ever use 20 percent of it on your commute. Just knowing it's there is enough to put a smile on your face.

Over my time with it, I did come across some annoying niggles. The CD player being in the glove box is one of them, and the desperately old-tech media screen is another – I'm sure the screen on my first mobile phone had better resolution.

OK, I'm exaggerating, but it really isn't good enough for a 2014 car costing almost £30,000 before options. Thankfully, the much-improved unit from the Leon X-Perience could see production in the Cupra in a year or two.

I've really grown to like the wheels. They give stance. I wasn't sure about them to begin with, thinking them on the large side for the size of car. At 19 inches, they make one heck of a statement and initially I'd have preferred the 18-inchers available only for the Leon FR, but the more you look at this car, the more the wheels make sense.

It's not a massively overstated car in terms of its styling, but there's no question in my mind that the wheels add attitude.

Until you kerb them, anyway. Protect them if you can.

What I really love about the hottest Leon is that it's not perfect. My affection for it comes squarely from the heart rather than the head. There are flaws to accept and work around, just like with a husband or wife, but it's all part of the hot Seat's unique character. It helps that it's especially beautiful in the three-door SC body style with its sleekly sloping roof line and rear three-quarter curves to die for.

The Leon Cupra 280 is uber-desirable; it's a car you buy because it pulls your heartstrings more than any of its rivals. But rest assured it has the bite to back up its bark.

TESTED

Seat Leon SC Cupra 280 DSG, from £28,230
Engine: 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder petrol
producing 276bhp @ 5,350-6,600rpm and 258lb.
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Transmission: Six-speed DSG automatic gearbox
driving the front wheels

Performance: Top speed 155mph (limited),
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Fuel economy: 42.8mpg (official)

CO2 rating: 155g/km

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Fresh style inside and out plus a new model

By Matt Kimberley

Kia's quart-from-a-pint-pot small car, the facelifted Venga, is now on sale in the UK.

There are restyled front and rear ends which give the Venga a sportier appearance and the interiors have been refreshed with added touches of luxury and more equipment. At the top of the range there is a new Venga 4 model.

The new line-up is based on five trim grades and four engines, giving a choice of 11 models. The highly economical 1.4- and 1.6-litre petrol and diesel engines are carried over from the previous Venga and give potential fuel economy of up to 64.2mpg, with CO2 emissions as low as 117g/km. Intelligent Stop & Go (ISG) is standard where it can effect a worthwhile improvement in fuel consumption and emissions, and appears on all but one manual version.

The 89bhp 1.4-litre petrol engine is offered with 1, 1 Air and 2 trim grades, while the 89bhp 1.4-litre diesel is reserved exclusively for Venga 2. The two 1.6-litre engines with manual transmission are available with grades 3 and 4. The 1.6 petrol engine is also offered with a four-speed automatic gearbox in grades 2, 3 and 4.

All versions have a more aggressive, sportier front bumper and main grille, featuring a new take on the 'tiger nose' theme with high-gloss black mesh and a chrome surround. The Kia logo has been relocated to the bodywork. The lower air intake has been redesigned to house daytime running lights (LED with grades 3 and 4) next to the fog lights, which now sit in high-gloss black housings joined by a chrome strip. There is also now a chrome strip linking the rear light units, which are LED on Venga 4. Another premium touch with Venga 4 is the chrome exterior door handles.

For grades 2 and above, there are new-style 16-inch alloy wheels with five triple spokes, while grades 1 and 1 Air continue with 15-inch steel wheels with five-spoke embellishers.

Interior improvements include new black Houndstooth cloth for entry-grade models, while grade 2 continues with black Beat cloth and level 3 again has black Bamboo part-leather and part-cloth upholstery. This is also fitted to the new Venga 4. There is a new Grey Metal Grain paint finish for the centre fascia of Venga 1, 1 Air and 2, while high-gloss black continues to adorn Venga 3 and is replicated in the new Venga 4.

Split rear seats that slide fore and aft by up to 130mm allow the passenger accommodation to be stretched when maximum luggage capacity is not needed. Alternatively, a two-tier boot means that owners who occasionally need more than the standard 440 litres of cargo space can expand the luggage area simply by lowering the floor. The luggage compartment thus becomes 163mm taller, extending total volume to 570 litres. If more space is required, the rear seats have 'Fold & Dive' functionality, which makes them seem to disappear into the floor, creating a completely flat deck in a load area offering a cavernous 1,253 litres of space.

Specified

All models are extremely highly specified, and features previously unattainable with the Venga now appear in certain models. Tyre Pressure Monitoring is fitted to all versions, warning the driver of any potentially serious loss of pressure via a symbol in the instrument cluster. Automatic Light Control is now standard with Venga 3 and 4, and Venga 4 also has 'welcome' and 'follow-me-home' lighting.

Other unique features to Venga 4 are a smart key with engine start/stop button, a heated steering wheel activated by a control switch on the right-hand wheel spoke to complement the heated front seats fitted to Venga 3 and 4, and a panoramic sunroof. Venga 3 and 4 are also equipped with a 7-inch touchscreen satellite navigation system with European mapping and a Traffic Messaging Channel. The full-colour touchscreen also includes a reversing camera. The infotainment system, which is also accessed via the touchscreen, no longer includes a CD player due to the increasing trend among customers of using portable devices to play music. The high-quality six speaker audio system includes RDS radio, full MP3 compatibility and AUX and USB ports.

Standard across the range are driver's seat height adjustment, tilt and telescopic steering wheel adjustment, electric front windows, remote central locking, tinted glass, steering wheel-mounted audio controls, a front passenger armrest, body-coloured handles and door mirrors and electrically adjustable heated door mirrors.

Venga 2 models add alloy wheels, an iPod cable, Bluetooth hands-free mobile phone operation with music streaming, rear electric windows, folding door mirrors and reversing sensors. Venga 3 versions come with climate control, front and rear electric windows, front fog lamps, privacy glass on the rear windows and tailgate and cruise control with a speed limiter.

For safety, all Vengas have six airbags, active front head restraints and two ISOFIX child-seat mounting points.

Every Venga has Kia's unique seven-year/100,000-mile warranty, subject to terms and conditions covering wear-and-tear items. It is transferable to future owners should the car be sold during the period of the warranty.



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LOOK

Siggy is hoping to be Bjorn again

FORGOTTEN man Bjorn Sigurdarson wants to be the missing link in Wolves' attack and finally prove himself a hit in England.

The £2.4m striker is back in training at Wolves and wants a fresh chance at Molineux after holding clear-the-air talks with head coach Kenny Jackett.

"He wants to prove himself at Wolves and he wants to prove himself in English football," said Jackett.

"He did have a bad hamstring/back injury but he's back training and fit and available."

Asked if he was prepared to give the Icelandic forward a fresh chance, Jackett said: "We'll see. He hasn't regular front line time."

"But he's a Wolves player so I'd always consider every player and I'll see how he looks."

"It's his aim and ambition to do very well here and do well in English football."

"That's where he is, he wants to work hard, be as professional as possible and see where it takes him. He's match fit, he's OK, training and has no problems at all."

Sigurdarson has spent the last year on loan at Norwegian side Molde.

Glassboys away slump continues

Ashton 3 Stourbridge 0
STOURBRIDGE boss Gary Hackett saw his side slump to a fourth straight away defeat at a blustery Hurst Cross Stadium.

Defender Josh Quaynor lined up for his first game in defence and there was also a first start for Reece Weeb, a teenage midfielder on loan from Birmingham City.

But the new-look Glassboys still struggled against an Ashton outfit just outside the play-off places.

On 29 minutes, Gary Gee headed a Dale Johnson cross past Stour keeper Dean Coleman.

Ashton doubled their lead as Cappin powered his effort beyond Coleman and then Johnson made it 3-0 when he tapped home a loose ball.

Running shoes back on for club members

Athletics

AFTER the Christmas break it was back to running around muddy fields for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club as the men travelled to Nuneaton for their Birmingham League fixture and the women ventured to Droitwich for the West Midlands League.

Over a stamina sapping windswept course at Burbage Common the men were able to consolidate their position in the Second Division finishing 15th of the 18 teams on the day to place 13th in the league some 200 points clear of relegation with one league race remaining.

Ben Foster again stormed through the

mud to finish in 15th place in 37.50, Rob Sannwald was 112th in 43.05, Darran Bishop, making his club debut, was 119th in 43.46, Matt Biggs was 123th in 43.55 despite struggling with a hamstring injury, Andy Sprague was a place behind in 124th in 43.58 and Dave Norman was 137th in 44.33.

The B team was brought home by James Wright finishing in 149th in 45.25, from Brian Preston in 152nd in 45.31, Gary

Bonner in 155th in 45.43, Mark Gatenby in 159th in 46.02, Daren Thompson in 175th in 47.00, Kieran Pitt in 179th in 47.17, Pete Hood in 181st in 47.20, Graham Wildgoose in 201st in 49.25, Mark Judge in 204th in 49.31, Paul Sils in 216th in 51.18 and Richard Tonks in 217th in 51.20.

At Droitwich the ladies team came 32nd of the 38 teams competing rubbing shoulders with the likes of Birmingham and Loughborough University students, including European Junior Silver medallist Jessica Judd and four time World Ironman Triathlon Champion Chrissie Wellington. Not to mention the usual cross country

heavyweights of Telford, Birchfield, Wolverhampton & Bilston and Tipton Harriers.

Of the DK runners Rebecca Warren was 158th in 33.50, Carol Fisher 175th in 34.45, Lynn Sprague 194th in 36.05, Karen Doy 218th in 37.48, Sarah Cox 237th in 38.59, Alison Whitehouse 245th in 39.37, Sally McConville 248th in 39.41, Kathryn Sneyd 258th in 40.18, Jane Campbell 264th in 40.43, Jacqui Elson-Whittaker 268th in 41.02, Liz Hettle 274th in 41.49, Meg Dowen 280th in 42.08, Lisa Newell 291st in 42.41, Charlotte Tonks 297th in 43.29 and Amanda Dawes was 305th in 44.31.

CRADLEY skipper Max Clegg has given the new-look Heathens side the thumbs-up.

Clegg, who returned to the track in practice at the weekend, has been handed the No.1 spot in the 2015 team to defend the National League title.

He will also take over from Paul Starke as the club's new skipper as they prepare for life at Perry Barr after losing the use of Wolverhampton.

Clegg will be joined by Nathan Greaves and Matt Williamson from last season's all-conquering side and Luke Harris is also included after making some guest appearances.

Ellin Perks, Aaron Mogridge and Mike Neale are the new signings and Clegg says they are looking good.

He added: "This year's team is looking good."

Clegg will be unveiled along with the rest of the Heathens side as they host a Season Launch night at the Copthorne Hotel, Brierley Hill, on Wednesday, March 11 (7.30pm).

Tickets (£5) are on sale for the event, after the clubs' press and practice day at Perry Barr. They are available on cradleyheathens.co.uk or from, Printworx, Quarry Bank High Street.

Khalsa's keeper is the killer

Dudley Town 1 Sporting Khalsa 1 (Khalsa win 3-2 pens)

A brilliant performance by Khalsa keeper James Pemberton helped Sporting Khalsa into the semi-finals of the West Midlands League Cup.

The deadlock was broken five minutes before the interval when Rhys Morgan poked past the onrushing Pemberton to give the home side the lead.

Craig Bannister levelled things up for Khalsa with header.

Pemberton was the hero, saving kicks from Alex Perry, Ben Jordan and Ashman while Lee Wherton, Mike Perks and Brad Lawley sent Ian Rowe's side into the semi-finals.

Yeltz claw back lead twice to grab win

Halesowen Town 4 Matlock Town 3
HARD-WORKING Halesowen turned around a half-time deficit after playing for almost an hour with 10 men in a seven-goal thriller.

Halesowen went ahead after just five minutes when captain Joe Hull turned home a corner from Aaron Griffiths within the six-yard box but the lead wasn't to last too long as Matlock struck back.

But James Ashmore struck twice as the Glad-
iatores snatched a shock half-time lead after home forward Aaron Daniels received a straight red card in the 35th minute when Adam Yates went to ground clutching his face.

Ashmore equalised with an unstoppable thunderbolt into the top angle from 25 yards in the 43rd minute and converted a penalty two minutes later when home goalkeeper Matt Sargeant brought down Joe Leesley on the edge of the penalty area.

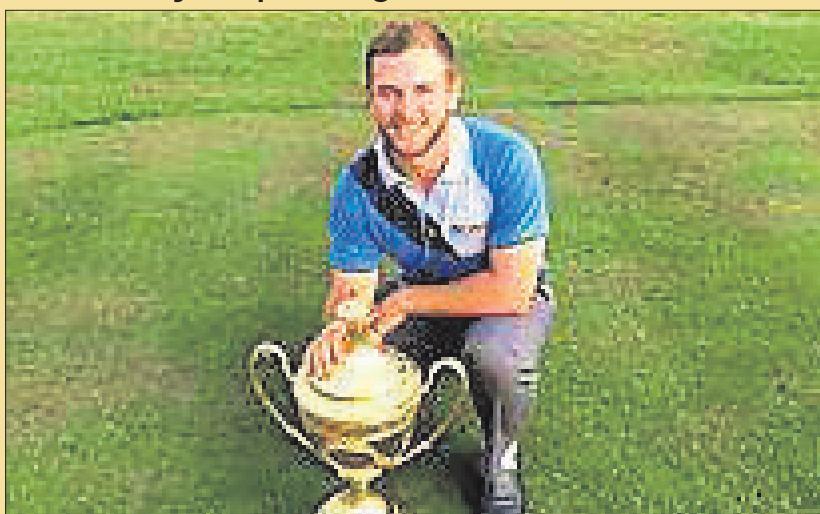
Ten-man Halesowen displayed their true team spirit and steeled themselves after the interval to turn the game around and take away the initiative from Matlock.

The comeback was started when Ben Haseley made it 2-2 in the 50th minute with an excellent finish from a free-kick which was taken quickly.

The Yeltz regained the lead at 3-2 in the 58th minute when a fierce drive from Griffiths deflected past goalkeeper Jon Kennedy which seemed to put the Yeltz in the driving seat.

With time running out, Halesowen hearts seemed to have been broken when Matlock substitute Jason

Golfer Ryan putting down his mark in US



Ryan Cornfield who is studying at university in America with one of his golfing trophies

ACE golfer Ryan Cornfield is following in the footsteps of his idols with a scholarship to an American university to play his favourite sport.

The 20-year-old, from Gornal, is playing at the University of South Carolina alongside a psychology degree.

He has already played in several competitions and even won freshman student athlete of the year.

Ryan said: "I am now in my third

year in the US and I got my scholarship through an agency when I was 17. I always wanted to play in the US but didn't think I was good enough until I had a great year so I looked into it and pretty much picked the first place that wanted me."

"I was actually always a big time footballer growing up and didn't take an interest in golf until I was about 11. When I realised I was pretty good at it I decided to give it my full attention and gave up football at 14."

"I don't actually study golf at university. I am doing a psychology degree, but I play golf for the university. That's how it works over here."

Ryan recently won the competitive Kiawah Island Classic competition in Charleston County with a university record of six under 66.

Ryan said he plans to return home after he graduates in May and would like to turn pro.



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Yeltz comeback

Halesowen come out on top after battle

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Stateside study

Golfer Ryan puts down his mark in US

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Yeltz get hotshot striker from Utd

HALESOWEN Town have won the battle to sign highly-regarded striker Aaron Lloyd from ground tenants Causeway United.

Redditch United and Tividale were both understood to have been interested in the 21-year-old forward but he has opted to join the Yeltz.

Halesowen boss John Hill says the former Stourbridge and Shrewsbury youngster fits the bill to keep improving his Evo-Stik Northern Premier squad. He is set for his debut in Saturday's home game against Matlock.

"At 21, Aaron has been around the non-League scene for the past four seasons. With this signing, we are looking after the future of our football club as we continue to push on," said Hill.

Stourbridge will be able to call on Brentford prospect Kieran Morris for another month after extending his loan.

The 19-year-old defender has impressed with Gary Hackett's side after joining last month and the two clubs have agreed to continue the deal until February 8.

Morris, who had been on Stourbridge's books as a youth before joining the Bees in 2013, has played six times for the Evo-Stik Northern Premier side.

Wilson signed up by Jackett

WOLVES have secured the permanent signing of another 'one of the future' after striker Donovan Wilson secured his move from Bristol Rovers.

The 17-year-old's capture was expected to be a formality when the transfer window reopened, having joined on loan in November.

Wolves have paid an undisclosed fee, which could rise long-term through appearance-based add-on clauses.

Bristol-born Wilson was highly-rated by Rovers and had made the first-team bench on several occasions, having come through the club's youth set-up. He will now join up with Wolves' Under-18 squad for the foreseeable future, but has also been making sporadic appearances for the Under-21s.

He said: "I'm happy to be at the club."

Tividale take the spark from Dynamo

Loughborough 1 Tividale 3

TIVIDALE kept up their great spell of form with a well-deserved victory at Loughborough Dynamo in Evo-Stik Division One South.

The Black Country outfit started the brighter and Andy Parsons will feel he should have done better on 15 minutes when he fired Zach Foster's cross over the bar.

Tividale's Chris Field, marvelling in his new right-back position, then went on a run down the right flank but again the final effort was not enough to trouble home keeper

Football

Joe McCormack.

Dynamo's first effort on goal was supplied by Matt Langham when with a great piece of skill he took down a high ball, but his shot went straight into the arms of Tividale keeper Charlie Price.

At the other end Edwards worked an opening for Parsons but again he fired no target.

On 25 minutes Tividale took a deserved lead when, from a Dynamo attack that

broke down, Leigh Downing broke free and played in Edwards who put the ball through McCormack's legs and into the back of the net.

The home side looked devoid of ideas until the 33rd minute when a rash Richard Huckfield pass went straight to Dynamo's Neil Dawkins and his first-time shot was turned around the post by Price. The danger was not clear though as from the resulting corner the scores were level when Pheasant's thumping header gave Price no chance.

The goal swung the momentum in the home

side's way for the last 10 minutes of the half and Tividale were glad of the half-time whistle.

Tividale had the ball in the Dynamo net on 61 minutes when Edwards was the first to react after McCormack parried his header and he bundled the ball over the line but the referee blew for a foul.

Danny Ashton beat Dynamo full-back Carl Sibson and his cross was met by Downing whose shot beat McCormack despite the keeper's effort.

Tividale made the points secure in injury time through substitute Jordan Archer.

Wulfs come to the four

Tipton 0 AFC Wulfs 4

A brace from Andy Thompson helped AFC Wulfrunians to a 4-0 victory against Tipton Town in the Midland League Premier Division.

Thompson opened the scoring after just 11 minutes when he fired in from the edge of the area.

He turned provider for the second goal, latching on to a Liam Bood pass and setting up Jamie King to crash the ball in off the underside of the bar.

A goal-line scramble could have put the visitors out of sight before half-time. David Howells saw his header saved, Thompson saw his shot blocked and Bood saw his effort saved before the ball was eventually cleared.

Just after the break, King went past two defenders with ease, but his low shot from the edge of the area was tipped away by Tipton keeper Jack Hayfield.

Danny Tipton's only save of the game came when he had to push away Tipton substitute Ian Millward's long-range effort with 70 minutes played.

After 80 minutes Thompson added his second. Craig Gregg completed the scoring four minutes from time.

Villa aim to net Spaniard Carles

ASTON Villa look poised to confirm the signing of Carles Gil from Valencia.

Valencia valued attacking midfielder Gil around £6million but Villa are understood to have negotiated over the fee as they did not want to pay over £4million.

The 22-year-old is expected to sign a five-year deal.

The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketley, Telford. Thursday, January 15

WIN STILL ELUDES BATTLING DK SIDE

Bournville 22 DK 9

THE home side came out of the blocks running and put DK under pressure.

However, they could not breach the determined defence. After weathering the early onslaught, DK began to ease their way into the game with play being contested between the two 22 metre lines.

After 14 minutes DK was penalised for the tackler not releasing. Bournville shunned the kick at goal opting to kick for the corner.

From the resulting line-out they secured possession and formed a rolling maul with hooker Danny Griffin driving over the line for the opening score.

The try went unconverted.

Straight from the restart, DK put the home side under pressure and were awarded a penalty for their efforts.

Furious

They also opted to kick for position but unlike Bournville, they were unable to win their lineout and the hosts were able to clear their lines.

At this point, both sides were equally matched and the game was being played at a fast and furious pace.

DK's aggressive tackling began to put Bournville under pressure which led to them giving away a penalty in the 20th minute. This time they elected to kick for goal and Jamie Hearn duly added the three points.

DK were now beginning to gain the upper hand and four minutes later they were awarded another kickable penalty. However, before

This proved to be the last points for the half.

In the second half the big heavy Bournville pack began to take control and were totally dominant.

On the hour mark following constant picking and driving Adam Woodfield crossed for a Bournville try. They were unable to add the extra points.

On full time Bournville's Ned Stephenson scored.



Matt Squires brought to the ground by the Bournville defence during a tough away match

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